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SCHOOL TO WORK

Starting a career out of high school has never been tougher. But student Jodi Hansel (left) has a mentor, Laura Kiemer, and a school that knows how to help. **See page 4**

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

The Music of Tomorrow

Most of us, I assume, are still trying to comprehend the full meaning of the November 3 elections. And our analytical abilities will probably be tested for a good while longer. But this much is certain: We again have reason for hope.

The election of Bill Clinton and Al Gore, combined with the new composition of Congress, gives us reason to believe that we will see more of the politics of compassion—and less of the politics of contempt. We'll see less divisiveness—and more togetherness. We'll see a nation more committed to equity, more focused on domestic challenges, more responsive to the imperative to reinvest in America.

It's my belief that beginning on January 20, 1993, there will be a new "feel" to the country. And maybe, just maybe, American policy—both foreign and domestic—will be shaped by a principle that Franklin Delano Roosevelt expressed many years ago.

"Human kindness," said FDR, "has never weakened the stamina or softened the fiber of a free people. A nation does not have to be cruel to be tough."

All this we hope. And more.

There is, of course, no doubt that we must inoculate ourselves against unrealistic expectations. Rough times lie ahead. The impact of 12 years during which fiscal policies were skewed in favor of the wealthy will not be quickly erased. And we will not easily be freed from the $400 billion annual deficit and the $4 trillion national debt that hang like a giant albatross around our nation's neck.

NEA President
Keith Geiger

Hope is one thing, euphoria another. We'd better be clear on the difference. For it is by slow incremental change—not by sudden dramatic movement—that our democracy shifts direction.

We'll first sense this change of course in President's Clinton's choice of Cabinet members. Those choices will tell us that we now have a President prepared to give real meaning to the phrase "a kinder, gentler America."

We'll sense a shift of direction when the new President begins filling the more than 200 federal judgeships that will become vacant during the next four years. President Clinton will understand that these appointments are critical to the work of ensuring that social justice is once again woven throughout the fabric of our nation.

We'll also feel America's change of course in the new relationship between the President and Congress. President Clinton will work with a Congress far more representative of our nation's diversity than any other in our history. Women will be more visible in the 103rd Congress, as will Hispanics, African Americans and Native Americans.

And you can bet that women and minorities will bring a fresh perspective to the federal debate on such critical issues as health care, child care, family and medical leave policy, and—yes—education.

That thought brings me back to us—to the people who devote their lives to the cause of public education. We will be among the first to feel the sea-change that will begin the moment Bill Clinton is inaugurated.

No longer will we endure assaults on our professionalism and our integrity. No longer will we face the daily harangues, the non-stop attempts to make us the scapegoats for all that is less than perfect in our nation. No longer will we confront the accusation that NEA and its members are obstacles to education reform.

From time to time our Association will, of course, have disagreements with the Clinton Administration. That's fine. That's healthy. The difference, this time, is that we will know beyond any doubt that we are disagreeing with an Administration that respects us—and that welcomes the give-and-take that is essential to consensus-building.

In brief, we are entering a new era. And it is an era in which the drumbeat for the privatization of education will become almost inaudible. For we now know (the latest Carnegie report spells this out) that privatization is not—and has never been—a grassroots movement. The drumbeat came from Presidents Bush and Reagan—and from their appointees in the Department of Education.

Under President Clinton, there will be no White House drumbeat for privatization. None at all. That's not just a hope—it's a fact. After all, President Clinton plays the saxophone, not the drums. And I think we're going to enjoy the change in our national music.

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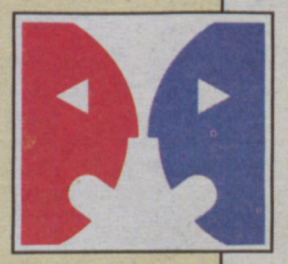

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NATIONAL NEWS

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

The First 100 DAYS

Election day victories are sweet, but the best is yet to come. A new Administration hits the ground running.

Today's high school seniors were in kindergarten the last time both the White House and Congress supported public education. But today's kindergartners won't suffer the same fate.

"Children and families were the big winners on November 3," NEA President Keith Geiger told the press. "Beginning Inauguration Day, January 20, the children of America will have a true advocate in the White House."

While Presidents Reagan and Bush wasted 12 years pushing for privatization, the Clinton Administration is already at work developing proposals that will improve *public* education.

"Bill Clinton has done his homework," says Geiger. "He's studied the issues and knows that the problems facing public education go beyond the classroom walls. I'm confident that he will come to class prepared to tackle the tough assignments of the day."

In his first 100 days, President Clinton is expected to launch plans to improve access to higher education, disseminate education reform strategies that work, and provide full funding for Head Start.

The 103rd Congress—with over 100 new members and new diversity—should be solidly behind the new President on these proposals and other pro-public education measures.

Many of the new Representatives and Senators have already shown themselves to be friends of education. Of the 350 congressional candidates who received NEA-PAC's endorsement, over 70 percent won their contests.

"NEA members made a crucial difference in the 1992 elections," says Association Executive Director Don Cameron. "I can say without hyperbole that no citizens were more active in this year's Presidential, congressional, state, and local races than NEA members.

"We walked precincts, staffed phone banks, and got out the vote," Cameron adds. "We can be proud of our work."

Joe DiDio

Thanks in part to the efforts of NEA members, the 103rd Congress is more diverse than any in history. Four women, all endorsed by NEA-PAC, were newly elected to the Senate.

Two new Senators are "firsts": Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois will become the first African American woman, and Ben Nighthorse Campbell will be the nation's first American Indian in the Senate in 60 years.

Twenty-four women, 16 African Americans, and 8 Hispanics were newly elected to the House. The total number of women in the House increased from 29 to 48.

Beyond the national picture, NEA affiliates and members in dozens of states campaigned for and against critical state ballot initiatives. A quick run-down of a few of these victories:

► Colorado voters defeated a proposed state constitutional amendment that would have granted vouchers to parents sending their children to private schools or schooling them at home. (See page 8 for more information.)

► Initiatives to limit taxes failed in Idaho and Michigan. Bond issues in Oklahoma and New Mexico passed. Louisiana voters defeated a proposed constitutional amendment to make it easier for the state to use money earmarked for education for other purposes.

► An amendment to the Maryland constitution protecting reproductive choice passed. And an Oregon initiative to prohibit the state from protecting homosexuals against discrimination failed.

And, finally, since Election Day is never an end in itself, NEA and seven other major national education organizations recently formed a historic coalition to create grassroots pressure for new economic priorities.

The groups—including the National School Boards Association and groups representing principals and administrators—have joined in asking every school district in the United States to urge Congress and the White House "to reinvest in America."

"The end of the Cold War—and upcoming debate on the first federal budget of the post-Cold War era—give us a chance to rethink America's priorities and to rebuild America," says NEA's Geiger. "We don't intend to let this opportunity slip by."

—*Stefanie Weiss*

OUTS

The "education President"	★ The education President
Privatization	★ Revitalization
Channel One	★ *Teacher TV*
NEA-bashing	★ Teamwork
Photo opportunities	★ Town meetings
Family values	★ Valuing families
Deregulation	★ Investment
Charter schools	★ Better schools
The bully pulpit	★ Leadership
Tuition tax credits	★ Family and Medical Leave
Richard Darman	★ Robert Reich
America 2000	★ America—right now
"Right to work"	★ Right to a college education
Chester Finn	★ Jonathan Kozol
Campaign for re-election	★ Campaign for New Priorities

INS

HEROES & ZEROES

For spreading holiday cheer year round, the Santa Award goes to 15-year-old Florencio Orozco of Los Angeles, who runs a toy-lending "library" in an inner-city housing project.

On Saturday mornings, Orozco opens the doors of a converted shed and helps children sign out some of the 3,000 donated toys housed there.

The effort takes time—over the past five years, Orozco's put in about 5,000 hours. "I don't want these kids to go to waste—to join gangs or to do drugs," the teen says. "I want them to be somebody."

Expectations for Chris Whittle's program Channel One were low to begin with. But get this: a University of Michigan study (that Whittle paid for!) has shown a massive reduction in the show's news content.

The initial promise: 10 minutes of news and 2 of ads. What was delivered last spring: 3.5 minutes of news, 2 of ads, and 6.5 of music, movies, fashion, and the like. Are a few borrowed TV sets worth this price?

"It is as poor as America gets." That's how the *New York Times* describes the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. But the Red Cloud Indian School on the Reservation is a tad richer this year, thanks to the volunteer efforts of NEA-Retired member Barbara-Jean Beatty.

The 70-year-old former high school teacher moved from Maine to South Dakota last August to donate her public relations and teaching skills to school staff. No couch potato herself, Beatty encourages others. "People my age," she says, "should get up off the sofa, turn off the TV, and do something."

If you swallowed ketchup as a vegetable, would you believe *The Jetsons* as educational television programming? A lot of broadcasters hope the folks at the Federal Communications Commission will buy it.

In a sleazy attempt to comply with the new Children's Television Act, some stations are claiming that shows like *Super Mario Brothers, Leave It to Beaver,* and *GI Joe* are educational. What next? Nintendo as phys ed?

COVER STORY

SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION THAT WORKS

Jodi Hansel in Michigan and Vincent McCain in North Carolina have this in common: high schools that made them work harder and smarter, with an eye on the workplace.

Robert Chase

By the time you read this, Jodi Hansel, a high school junior in the Mt. Morris school district in Flint, Michigan, may know whether she wants to be an engineer or not. Since November, Jodi's been making calls on customers (other GM plants) with her mentor, 24-year-old Laura Kiemer, an industrial engineer at the AC Rochester (General Motors) plant in Flint.

Two years ago, as a Mt. Morris High freshman, Jodi wasn't focused on her future. Or even on her "present"—her studies. In fact, all her grades were *C*s and *D*s.

Then, as a sophomore, Jodi got all *A*s. This year, with a schedule that includes Algebra II and chemistry, she's getting all *A*s and *B*s.

What enlarged Jodi's world and propelled her to higher levels of achievement is Mt. Morris' new workplace literacy program. The program began in Jodi's freshman year and now permeates the high school curriculum.

Mt. Morris set up one of the many "school-to-work transition" programs that have started up across the country as attempts to raise the achievement levels of high school students in non-college-prep programs and smooth their way into the workforce.

These new programs are the result of tremendous dissatisfaction with the nation's current school-to-work transition mechanism. It's "the worst of any advanced industrial country," according to *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!*, a report from the National Center on Education and the Economy that formed the basis for President-elect Bill Clinton's campaign proposals on education and training.

Boiled down, here's what *America's Choice* and other critiques say is wrong with our school-to-work transition:

- Too many U.S. high school students learn too little in the dumbed-down general track.
- Once out of school, the general-track kids are relegated to low-skill burger-flipping jobs for the six or eight years it takes before U.S. industry will offer them a serious job.
- Meanwhile, our European and Japanese competitors push their "non-college" kids to high academic achievement and high-skill jobs via such focused school-to-work transition devices as apprenticeships.
- Because half of U.S. young people receive no formal job training, a skills shortage has developed. That in turn makes it hard for companies to create the new high-skill jobs that will make them competitive overseas.

The cure for a haphazard school-to-work transition is a focused transition—a transition that links the high school experience of non-college-prep kids with serious career-related experiences, such as apprenticeships or two-year technical degrees. With real work in sight, these kids will buy into a more difficult curriculum in high school.

The Mt. Morris district's workplace literacy program is the product of a joint business-education-labor design team that's probably unique in the nation. The team represents the Mt. Morris Education Association, the Mt. Morris school district, the AC Rochester-Flint General Motors plant, and Local 659 of the United Auto Workers.

Flint's blue-collar origins are key to understanding the need for the program, says MMEA president Doug Gould, a design team member on full-time release from his teaching assignment.

"A few years ago, we began to realize that only 20 percent of our students were going on to college," Gould explains, "and that only half of them were graduating.

"In a changing economy, where good jobs increasingly require advanced education, that meant most of our students weren't being prepared for anything."

In 1989, the local NEA and UAW affiliates, the school district, and AC/GM joined forces to restructure

Moving to Tech Prep? If So, Think About —

Here are some things a school district can do to ensure that any shift to tech prep curriculum is fair for students and staff.*

- Collect data on equitable participation rates of special populations and women.
- Make curriculum content equivalent to the content of the college prep program.
- Have multiple entry and exit points between the tech prep and college prep curriculums.
- Encourage widespread participation from all academic levels, not just former general track students.
- Make sure time and funds are included for professional development, especially when integrated academic and vocational coursework will take both academic and vocational teachers into new teaching areas.
- Be alert to the possible need for changes in certification.

*NEA Special Committee on Occupational/Vocational Education, 1991-92

COVER STORY

SCHOOL-TO-WORK

Mt. Morris High's curriculum.

With $200,000 a year from GM and the UAW ($1 million all told, before the project's over, Gould says), teachers from Mt. Morris and trainers from GM have worked the last four summers to develop an introductory workplace skills course for 9th graders, plus academic courses in which students use the skills—teamwork, for example—they'll use in the workplace.

It was the ninth grade course that turned Jodi Hansel around. Besides the workplace skills, it covers computer literacy, the study of careers, and study skills.

"I learned how to listen to my teachers better," Jodi says, "and to work with a team of classmates to cover material we had to learn."

More significant for Jodi's future, the workplace skills course offered the chance to do a career study project. Jodi chose engineering as the field to investigate. Now, two years later, she's checking it out in person, working 10 hours a week with mentor Laura Kiemer at the AC Rochester plant.

The workplace literacy program at Mt. Morris isn't just a hands-on vocational program. It's also a take-tougher-courses program. (Next year Jodi will take more math and physics.)

To ratchet up the achievement level of its students, Mt. Morris High School is about to become one of more than 1,000 high schools around the country to offer a "tech prep" curriculum.

Tech prep is a high school curriculum that runs parallel to the college prep program. It offers a sequence of courses—both academic and vocational—that are articulated to prepare students for a two-year technical degree program at a community college.

Tech prep targets kids in the general track, offering them much harder courses than they've been used to taking. In fact, like many other districts, Mt. Morris intends to use tech prep to eliminate the general track altogether.

Vincent McCain, 22, is a Charlotte, N.C.-based field engineer with Reynolds and Reynolds, a firm that installs and maintains computers in auto dealerships. He's also a graduate of the award-winning tech prep program at Richmond County Senior High in Rockingham, North Carolina.

Would McCain have this job without the tech prep program's electronics sequence, which goes from high school through a two-year degree at Richmond Community College?

"The program pushed you," McCain recalls. "There's a tendency for kids in school to take the easiest way out. With tech prep, you couldn't."

Richmond Senior High likes to use McCain as an example of the tech prep program's success. But principal—and Association member—Ralph Robertson also measures the program's success by the numbers.

Tech prep was first offered in 1987-88. Since then, enrollment has evened out at just over 40 percent of all students. (A third are enrolled in college prep.)

Today 72 percent of students take Algebra I (compared to 54 percent in 1987), and nearly half take Algebra II (compared to 23 percent in 1987). The proportion taking chemistry has jumped from 31 percent in 1989 to 43.5 percent in 1992. The explanation: tech prep students are required to take Algebra I and three sciences.

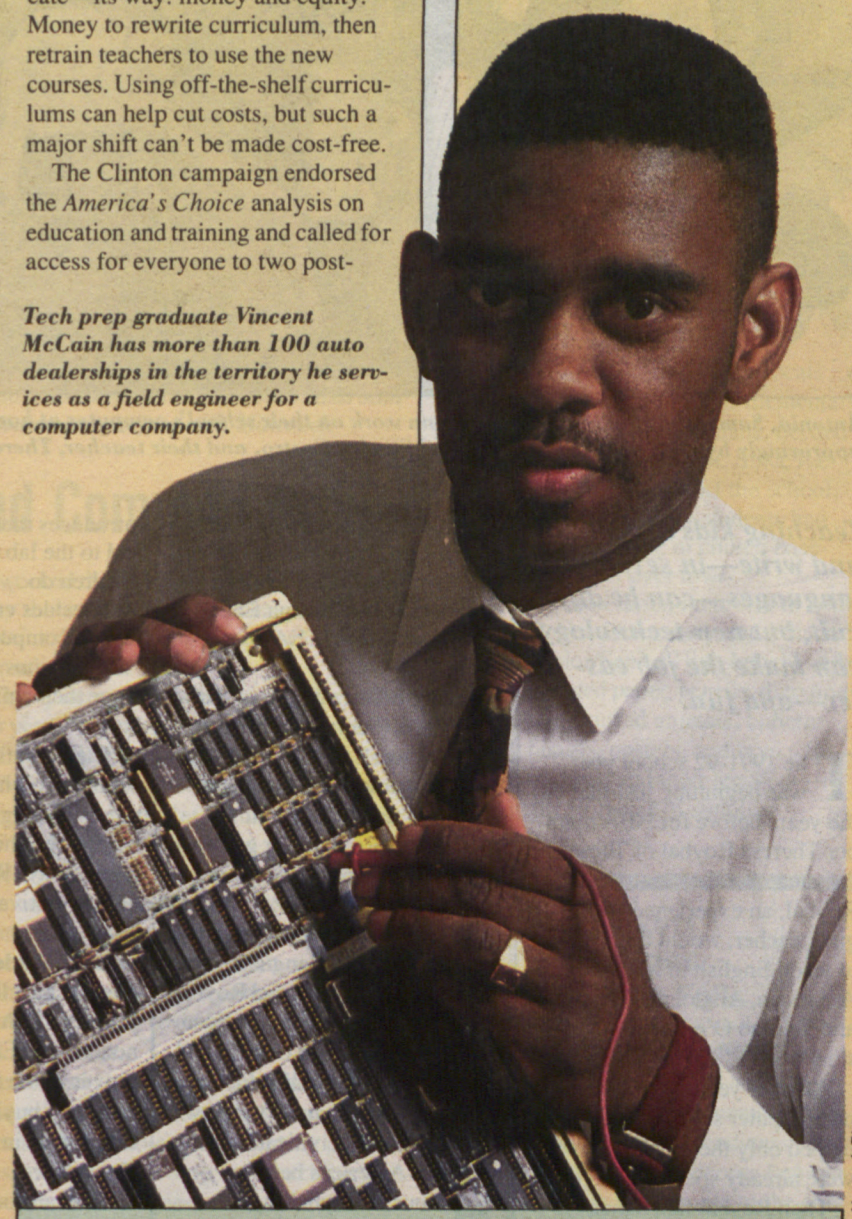
Meanwhile, the dropout rate at Richmond Senior High has fallen from 7.2 percent in 1985-86 to 3.3 percent in 1990-91.

The workplace-oriented high school curriculum seems poised to move nationwide. But two issues could impede—or at least complicate—its way: money and equity. Money to rewrite curriculum, then retrain teachers to use the new courses. Using off-the-shelf curriculums can help cut costs, but such a major shift can't be made cost-free.

The Clinton campaign endorsed the *America's Choice* analysis on education and training and called for access for everyone to two post-high-school years of apprenticeship or community college training. But whether such a program will become law is another matter.

The equity question is this: will all students have an equal chance to benefit from the upgraded curriculums? (See box on p. 4 for the recommendations of the NEA Special Committee on Occupational/Vocational Education). Or will schools focus just on the students who can be reoriented most easily from general math to Algebra I?

—Nancy R. Needham



Nancy J. Pierce

Tech prep graduate Vincent McCain has more than 100 auto dealerships in the territory he services as a field engineer for a computer company.

School-to-Work: Home and Abroad

- U.S. high school dropout rate: 20 percent
- Proportion of U.S. high school grads who don't go to college: half
- Proportion of U.S. college freshmen who don't graduate: half
- Real earnings of male high school graduates, aged 20-24, between 1973 and 1986: down 28 percent
- Average age of U.S. apprentices: 29
- Proportion of German work force trained by government-industry apprenticeship program: 65 percent (375 occupations)
- Number of German youth who applied for three-year apprenticeships in 1990: 600,000
- The German apprentice is paid year-round and is guaranteed a job.

•Sources: General Accounting Office, in *Washington Post; Washington Post;* American Society for Training and Development and *Education & Income: Recent Trends,* by Levy and Michel, both in *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!*

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Joy of Teaching 'Biliteracy'

Edward McCain

Antonio, Samantha, Andrea, and Fransena work on their school's computer at home, watched approvingly by their parents, Gustavo and Sandra Castro, and their teacher, Theresa Roybal.

Teaching kids to read and write—in several languages—can be difficult, but new technology can make the job easier—and fun.

The 1991-92 school year was beginning just like all the years before for NEA member Theresa Roybal of Tucson, Arizona. Another year when Roybal, an experienced bilingual teacher, would do her best to teach English to Mexican American, Anglo, and Yaqui and Tohono O'odham Indian students.

Another year, too, of relying on computer software that helped only the 30 percent who were already speaking English.

Then Roybal laid hands on some new computers—and she and her students haven't been the same since. Through a grant from the Apple Computer Corporation, Roybal brought 19 computers into the school.

Using her computer manuals and a lot of trial and error, Roybal and colleague Maria Figueroa learned how to harness the power of the computer to help their students learn. Through Tucson's staff development program, Roybal and Figueroa took every computer course available.

The uses Roybal found for the computers—for which she later became one of NEA's Christa McAuliffe Educators—could be adapted for many schools, says Marilyn Freed, a colleague and president of the Tucson Education Association (TEA).

In the biliteracy lab of Mission View Elementary School, students work with a computer and an instructional team consisting of their classroom teacher and Roybal (for grades 3 and 4) or Figueroa (for grades 5 and 6).

The third and fourth graders study the English language with the help of software, and Roybal has introduced software in Spanish on Mexican and Central and South American Indian history.

"Our students need to know that there were civilizations all over the Americas before Columbus," Roybal says.

Her 120 third and fourth graders write and draw about legends, people, and customs of the early Americas. While they improve their literacy skills, they also recognize and appreciate a variety of Indian cultures. "And culture," says Roybal, "is a key part of literacy."

But the literacy goes beyond even the linguistic and cultural. Roybal's students may do their writing and drawing by hand—or they may use a word processing or computer graphics program.

And computer literacy goes beyond the students. Twice a month, parents come for a two-hour in-service, when Roybal introduces them to computers and to the lab exercises the children do.

"Besides erasing parents' fear of computers," she says, "the sessions help them reinforce their children's learning at home."

The parents borrow the school's five home-sharing computers and sign contracts for their care. They're careful and honest, says Roybal, as well as highly motivated.

Roybal's local Association does its part to support multiliteracy. TEA President Freed notes that TEA was a prime mover of the school district's policy of buying only software that comes in both Spanish and English.

TEA also supported establishment of Tucson's "Grow Our Own" program. Grow Our Own puts 60 instructional aides studying for college degrees into the district's Yaqui- and Tohono O'odham-English and other bilingual programs.

"In our city's schools," Freed says, "multiliteracy is becoming a joy to teach."

—Mary Faber
NEA Human and Civil Rights

For the latest on literacy and the use of technology, contact the National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Person To Watch

Sen. Carol Moseley Braun (D-Ill.) symbolizes November's change in Congress, which now has a Native American Senator, not to mention more women, African-Americans, and Hispanics than at any time in history.

Best Wins for Education Employees

Congress has a new look, a new President to work with, and new energy, thanks in part to the hard work of NEA members across the country. Over 70 percent of NEA-PAC-endorsed candidates for Congress were successful. Together with *President* Clinton, Congress may finally bring real commitment to the education of all America's children.

Worst Defeats for Education Employees

This record-breaking election year brought its share of disappointments, too. Senate candidate Lynn Yeakel found incumbent Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) too powerful to defeat.

Education also lost several incumbent friends in Congress, including Sen. Terry Sanford(D.-N.C.), Les AuCoin (D-Oregon), Gerry Sikorski (D-Minn.), Tom Downey (D-N.Y.), Tom McMillen (D-Md.), and Mary Rose Oakar (D-Ohio).

Some of the members of Congress who will be most missed, however, weren't defeated at the polls. They were among the 66 who didn't seek reelection. Among the most notable of these is Sen. Tim Wirth (D-Colo.).

. . .And What You Can Do

New members of Congress—and returning members,too—need to hear from you. They have hard choices ahead and are looking for guidance. They need to hear that education isn't just an election priority...it's a national priority. Contact your Senators and Representative before the new session begins.

Political Cartoon of the Month

I'LL BET YOU'RE HAPPY THE ELECTION'S OVER...
I'LL SAY!
ARE YOU "HAPPIER," "LESS HAPPY" OR "JUST AS HAPPY" AS YOU WERE IN '88?...
AAAH
Rob Rogers
The Pittsburgh Press
United Feature Syndicate

Congressional Quote of the Month

"The sound you just heard was the shattering of the glass ceiling for women."

Rep. Leslie Byrne
(D-Virginia)
First woman elected to represent the Old Dominion in the U.S. Congress in 100 years.

Local Look

NEBRASKA

Lincoln Looks To Teachers

Voters in Lincoln defeated a $31 million bond issue in 1991, but passed a $57 million issue in 1992. In the interim, the Lincoln school board had made its peace with the teachers union.

"At the time of the 1991 vote," explains Lincoln Education Association President Ruth Ann Wylie, "we didn't have a negotiated contract. There was a feeling in the community that if the district couldn't settle with its teachers, it had no business asking for approval of a bond issue."

This year, Wylie says, the district settled its contract quickly. LEA went on to play a high-profile role in the bond issue campaign, making the largest financial contribution of any local group—$5,000 from LEA-PAC and a matching $5,000 from the state Association PAC.

In the end, 58 percent voted for the bond issue. "Two thirds of the voters in a local poll said their opinion about LEA was the #1 indicator of how they'd vote on the bond issue," Wylie says. "The result indicates their opinion was high."

MARYLAND

NEA Members Make Healthy Choices

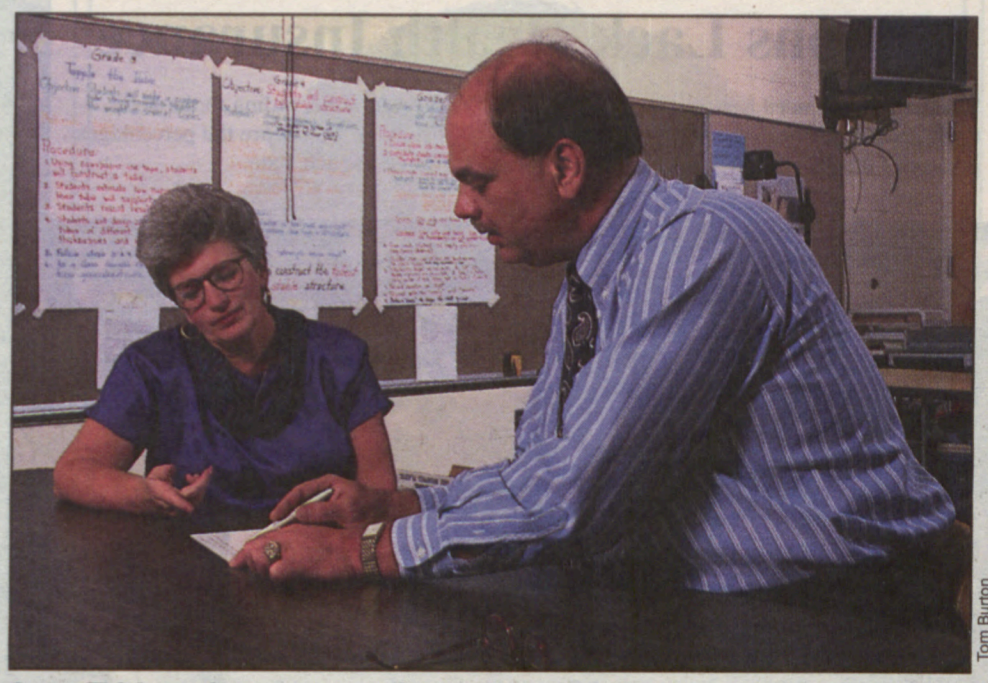
It took two years of negotiations and coalition-building with insurance underwriters and school board members, but the Prince Georges County Educators Association has finalized a state-of-the-art health plan that offers members substantial coverage and a choice of health care options.

The plan provides major improvements over the existing plan, eliminating lifetime limits on benefits, reducing the premium burden, and placing caps on out-of-pocket payments by members.

The plan also incorporates all three major types of health plans: health maintenance organization (HMO), preferred provider organization (PPO), and traditional indemnity plan. Members may choose one of the three each time they need health care instead of once a year.

In doing so, PGCEA and its partners address the rising price of medical care, while leaving the choice of health plans up to the individual.

IN OSCEOLA, FLORIDA



Tom Burton

Janice Welch, an elementary research specialist and president of the Osceola Classroom Teachers Association, discusses the new teacher assessment project with Millcreek Elementary Assistant Principal Nello Rodgers.

Teachers, Principals Find Common Ground

It sounds subtle—the change from teacher *evaluation* to teacher *assessment*—but for teachers in Osceola County, Florida, insisting on the switch was more than just splitting hairs over contract language.

Three years ago, members of the Osceola Classroom Teachers Association (OCTA) voiced concern about traditional teacher evaluation—in their case, 30-minute observations recorded on a checklist. Their view: the system was neither helping marginal teachers to improve nor encouraging already effective teachers.

A group of five OCTA members and five district administrators met to examine whether a new philosophy of performance measurement could help teachers become more effective. One conclusion, says OCTA President Janice Welch, an elementary research specialist, "Evaluation makes a value judgment about performance. Assessment measures and develops performance."

Deciding the district needed a true assessment system, the committee developed a Personnel Performance Plan for Teacher Development. They also learned something about teacher/adminstrator collaboration.

"We had our ups and downs, but in the end we worked through the 'us-against-them' mentality that can prevent real change," Welch explains. The resulting system was piloted in four schools last year.

The system gives teachers with less than four years' experience an observation based on the Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS) and an assessment form that rates competencies from "effective" to "ineffective" to "growth shown."

Teachers with four or more years' experience who've demonstrated effective teaching on previous assessments can participate in the Educators' Growth Plan (EGP).

The EGP brings teachers and their administrators together to review ideas and agree on goal statements.

Teachers in last year's pilot schools chose to begin asking more questions that stress higher order thinking skills, implementing portfolio assessment, and learning new teaching techniques from colleagues.

"What an opportunity for collegial sharing and support!" says Cindy Williams, district staff development specialist. "This system is a natural as we move to site-based decision making and setting goals for school improvement."

OREGON

Affiliate ACEs

The Oregon Education Association recently welcomed two new affiliates into the OEA.

The first is the Santiam Education Association/Association of Classified Employees, formed when the 50-member teacher affiliate and the 28-member classified affiliate merged to become OEA's eleventh wall-to-wall local Association.

The second is the 400-member Klamath County Association of Classified Employees, representing custodians, maintenance specialists, secretaries, instructional assistants, and food and transportation workers. Formerly represented by another organization, the Klamath County classified workers voted 2 to 1 to join the OEA family.

Klamath County ACE wasted no time getting down to business. Within weeks, it had created its first membership promotion and filed its first three grievances.

NEW YORK

Helping, as Only Colleagues Can

When Hurricane Andrew devastated parts of Florida and Louisiana, Elmira Heights school employees recognized all it would mean to schools.

Second grade teacher Cathy Kawecki of Nathan Cohen Elementary School acted. She told colleagues in the Elmira Heights Teachers Association and the Educational Support Sta.f Association: "We can help."

EHTA and EHESSA did help. "We decided to send the kinds of things school employees usually buy out of their own pockets," recalls Kawecki. "Things a school district doesn't routinely provide."

The Elmira Heights locals decided Hattie Watts Elementary in Patterson, Louisiana, needed their help the most. Since the roof had blown off the school, the 500 primary students had been meeting in church basements all over town.

Association members in both Cohen Elementary and Edison Junior/Senior High bought and donated paper, pencils, ditto masters, stuffed animals, bulletin boards, posters, and books for children and their teachers—in all, 17 boxes of supplies.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Sun Shines On Sioux Falls

Sioux Falls Education Association, the local PTA, and Sunshine Foods have teamed up to provide a school readiness series targeted to low-income families and new immigrants to the community.

Garfield Elementary kindergarten teacher Kathy Tunge and a home economist with Sunshine Foods lead the program.

Smart Start offers sessions on nutrition, learning activities parents can do with their children at home, and basic information about social security numbers, physical examinations, immunizations, and so on. The series is geared to parents of children ages 3 to 5.

Beginning in January, leaders will take the courses to local child care facilities and to the Department of Social Services to reach parents who might not know about the program or might not otherwise be able to attend.

State Side

IDAHO

Voters Reject Limits

Property taxes in Idaho won't be limited to 1 percent of a property's taxable value. Special levies won't require a two-thirds vote to pass.

The Idaho Education Association, working with 70 other organizations, helped defeat the "1 percent initiative" on the November ballot.

The measure would have caused immediate budget cuts and made it difficult to raise funds to improve instruction, construct and repair buildings, or buy equipment.

"We're gratified by the results," says IEA President Dick Chilcote. "The legislature can now look at the value of public services in Idaho and determine what resources they need."

MARYLAND

Involuntary Servitude

The Maryland State Teachers Association is fighting regulations under a new state law that requires high school students to perform 75 hours of community service in order to graduate.

MSTA has been joined by parents, local officials, and other education organizations in opposing the regulations. MSTA charges the plan would burden already financially strapped school districts.

"And, though we may agree that community service is a valuable experience for students," explains MSTA President Jane Stern, "we shouldn't destroy the spirit of that service."

COLORADO

Voucher Vanishes

The entire NEA family is taking credit for the defeat—by a two-to-one margin—of the only voucher initiative to appear on the November ballot in any state. The Colorado proposal would have required that state funding for K-12 education be divided among all students for use in public, private, or home schools.

Pro-voucher forces looked strong as recently as August, when 52 percent of Colorado's likely voters favored the measure. But in the voting booths, 65 percent (603,107) voted against the voucher proposal, while only 35 percent (324,296) backed it.

"We never could have turned around public opinion without the help of NEA and its other state affiliates," says Colorado Education Association President Dan Morris. The NEA and 29 state affiliates contributed money that went to buy TV and radio time. Observes CEA's Morris: "Now the enemies of public schools know that no matter where they go with the voucher issue, they'll face NEA's 2 million members."

HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

Millions Lack Health Insurance

Wonder why we need health care reform? Consider this: In 1991, more than 14 percent of all Americans were without health insurance, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Below are the percentages of uninsured in each state.

State	Uninsured	State	Uninsured
Alabama	17.9%	Montana	12.7%
Alaska	13.1	Nebraska	8.2
Arizona	16.9	Nevada	18.7
Arkansas	15.7	New Hampshire	10.1
California	18.7	New Jersey	10.8
Colorado	10.1	New Mexico	21.5
Connecticut	7.5	New York	12.3
Delaware	13.2	North Carolina	14.9
Dist. of Col.	25.7	North Dakota	7.6
Florida	18.6	Ohio	10.3
Georgia	14.1	Oklahoma	18.2
Hawaii	7.0	Oregon	14.2
Idaho	17.8	Pennsylvania	7.8
Illinois	11.5	Rhode Island	10.1
Indiana	13.0	South Carolina	13.1
Iowa	8.8	South Dakota	9.9
Kansas	11.4	Tennessee	13.4
Kentucky	13.1	Texas	22.1
Louisiana	20.7	Utah	13.9
Maine	11.1	Vermont	12.7
Maryland	13.1	Virginia	16.3
Massachusetts	10.9	Washington	10.4
Michigan	9.0	West Virginia	15.7
Minnesota	9.3	Wisconsin	8.0
Mississippi	18.9	Wyoming	11.3
Missouri	12.2	**Source:** Census Bureau	

ARKANSAS

Hurry with Reform!

The Arkansas Education Association has handed the State Board of Education a petition signed by 10,078 members seeking relief from skyrocketing health insurance costs.

The state government contributes $71 a year for every school employee, but educators in most school districts get no other help with premiums, and their situation's growing desperate.

Only the Little Rock, Fayetteville, and Fort Smith districts pick up the total balance of premiums.

Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield announced a 26.1 percent increase in health insurance premiums to go into effect October 1. That means a $380 yearly increase in the cost of single coverage and $1,070 in family coverage.

Only 20 of the state's 319 school districts pay anything at all towards employees' insurance premiums. Asserts AEA President Sid Johnson: "Solving the insurance crisis has become the number one priority."

MASSACHUSETTS

Sharp Forward Turn

For two years, Massachusetts students and school employees suffered from unrestrained budget cuts and vetoes under Governor William Weld.

Many school employees lost their jobs; their colleagues faced crammed classes and deteriorating conditions with insufficient supplies; and higher education costs soared out of students' reach. A solid one-third Republican bloc in the state senate helped block any attempts to override the governor's vetoes.

That's over now. Hard work by the Massachusetts Teachers Association and other citizens organizations paid off at the polls last month. The enraged electorate sent six more Democrats to the state senate, putting an end to Weld's unlimited veto power. At the same time, they knocked out the house minority leader.

Overall, 86 percent of MTA-endorsed candidates won election to Congress and the state legislature.

WISCONSIN

Grades and Parents

A recent survey of 1,200 high school students by the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) verifies the strong connection between grades and parental involvement.

The survey found that over half of students who earned *A's* or *B's* have parents who show interest in their courses, expect help with household chores, have relatively few disagreements with them, and have rules about television viewing.

Twice as many parents of *A/B* students attend parent-teacher conferences—and four times as many attend school functions—as do parents of *C/D* students.

"Simply put, good teachers plus good parents equals good students," says WEAC President Richard Collins.

Meet:

Barbara Jordan

Charles Guerrero

Making a Difference

Barbara Jordan has always made a difference, whatever role she was playing—lawyer, politician, or educator. Jordan was the first Black woman elected to the Texas Senate, and she represented Texas' 18th district for three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Jordan currently holds the Lyndon B. Johnson Centennial Chair in National Policy at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. Her classes are so popular that students have to be assigned by lottery.

In 1990 Jordan was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, an organization that honors the achievements of great American women.

NEA Today *staff writer Karen Zauber recently visited Jordan at her office in Austin.*

How would you describe your elementary school years?
I went to the public schools in Houston, and I didn't like school. I didn't want to go to school because I was a person engaged in serious play.

And then my mother, father, and sisters said, "You're never going to amount to anything unless you go to school. You've got to get something in your head."

I decided right then that I sure did want to amount to something, so I went to school. After a bit, I started to like it.

Who were your role models as you were growing up?
Most of my teachers, because they helped me develop a heightened sense of self-esteem. My parents, because they worked hard and instilled in me the idea that anything I wanted to get, I had to exercise some effort to get it. And my maternal grandfather, who was a very strong influence in my life.

What sparked your interest in law and politics?
I became a lawyer primarily to create a good base for getting into politics. I wanted to do something to have an effect on my surroundings. It was my view that politics would give me the chance to have that kind of effect.

When you left Congress, how did you happen to go into teaching?
A number of offers came to me once I'd announced that I wouldn't run for re-election. One proposal was from the LBJ School of Public Affairs here at the University of Texas.

I knew Lyndon Johnson and knew what he wanted the LBJ School to become. The idea of playing a definitive role in educating young people to go into government was very attractive to me.

Have you enjoyed teaching?
I didn't know whether teaching would be fulfilling for me, but I have now been a professor for over 12 years and I love it. I've been a teacher longer than I've pursued any other career.

What ideals of citizenship do you hope to convey to your students?
That we're fortunate to be living in a country with a democratic form of government. We're the ones, living in this moment and at this time, who are called upon to implement the ideas and ideals that were a part of the founding base of the country.

What's the role of education in a democracy?
For citizens to govern themselves, they must have a massive infrastructure. And education is a part of that infrastructure. That makes education incredibly vital.

How can teachers get students interested in politics and public service?
They can tell students: "Find a peer group of people who believe in the ideas and values you have. People who want to be contributors to life and not detractors from life. People who aren't willing to put their brains on hold. People who are willing to undertake difficult and helpful tasks.

"Work with them."

Several topics are causing a good deal of discussion among educators. Where do you stand, for example, on proposals that would use public tax dollars for private school tuition?
The public schools are owned by the public, and public tax dollars should be used to support public schools. If we use those tax dollars to also support private schools, we have less money available for the public schools.

As a product of the public schools, I want maximum resources available to the public schools.

What about all-Black-male schools?
If you have the kind of resources in an all-Black-male school that will make a difference, I would not denigrate such schools. The big caveat is that we cannot do this at the expense of others who need special attention.

Do you approve of special programs for the gifted and talented?
I believe we should apply as many resources, as much talent, time, and attention to the gifted and talented as we do to those who are highly at risk. The gifted and talented must be encouraged to perform and made to understand that they have additional responsibility to contribute back to those who have not been as fortunate.

How do you view parental involvement in the schools?
It is crucial. It isn't fair to expect teachers to do all of the things we expect teachers to do—care, feed, and nurture the body as well as the mind.

What about giving out condoms at school?
I'm for it. I absolutely am. With the AIDS epidemic, condom use is at least one little thing that we can do to try to combat this disease.

Do you favor dress codes?
I like the idea of removing some of the competition. Kids want to have the latest Reeboks, the designer jeans, the signature piece on the sweaters. If we could remove the competition of being the best-dressed person ever, that would be a good development.

Physical difficulties affect different people in different ways. How have physical difficulties changed your life?
My legs don't work like other people's because of multiple sclerosis, but I discovered quite early that no one was asking me to walk or run or dance. I discovered that my physical impairment did not diminish my thinking or the quality of my mind. And it did not impact on my capacity to talk.

I assessed the physical limitations and the things that still worked. I felt I should treat the limitations as irrelevant and refuse to let them be an impediment.

You've said you're looking forward to your fourth career. Any hints about what that will be?
I've discovered, in teaching a course in ethics and public service, that there's no text that includes all the ideas I feel ought to be included. Maybe in my next career, I'll put that text together.

What's kept you on course in your life?
I've always felt that as long as you're alive, you should be doing something that makes a difference. I've continually tried to see whether things I'm doing are making any difference to anybody, anywhere. A difference however small, however minor.

You don't have to do big, gigantic things. Just do things incrementally that make a difference.

For more information on the National Women's Hall of Fame and ideas for bringing women's history into the classroom, see Your NEA, page 33.

RESOURCES

TV Tips

Capital Cities/ABC

Lincoln—*ABC, Saturday, Dec. 26, 8-10 p.m. ET, and Sunday, Dec. 27, 7-9 p.m. ET.* A four-hour, two-part special on Abe Lincoln, told through photographs of the time and through his letters and writings read by Jason Robards. Study guides, produced by KIDSNET, will be available through ABC affiliates. The companion book, **Lincoln: An Illustrated Biography**, written by Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., Philip B. Kunhardt III and Peter Kunhardt, and published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1992 is available at local bookstores.

Ready, Set, Learn—*Learning Channel, Monday-Friday, 6 a.m.-12 noon ET.* Premieres December 28. Six hours of commercial-free programming for preschoolers, designed to help develop skills in reasoning, whole language, basic reading, conceptualization, and imagination. Each segment will air twice daily.

The Restless Conscience—*PBS, Wednesday, Dec. 30, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Documentary about a small group of Germans who struggled against the Nazi regime.

Chanukah at Grover's Corner— *PBS, sometime in December; check local listings for dates and times.* The story of Chanukah in narrative and song for children ages three and up.

Western National Band Clinic

If You Knew Sousa—*PBS, sometime in December; check local listings for dates and times.* American Experience special about turn-of-the-century bandleader and composer John Philip Sousa.

A Matter of Conscience—*HBO, sometime in December; check local listings for dates and times.* Family Playhouse production about a boy who learns his grandfather was a Nazi and a soldier in Hitler's army.

The Perfect Date—*HBO, sometime in December; check local listings for date and time.* Family Playhouse production about a teen who discovers that being popular isn't all he thought it would be.

Schoolbreak Specials—*CBS, selected Tuesdays, 4-5 p.m. ET.* Jan. 5: "Maggie's Secret." A 15-year-old must learn to cope with parental alcohol abuse. Jan. 19: "Off Limits." Student filmmakers and the school board clash over a production with a controversial topic. Study guides, produced by KIDSNET, are available through CBS affiliates.

The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power— *PBS, Monday, Jan. 11-Thursday, Jan. 14, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Four-part, eight-hour documentary based on the Pulitzer-Prize-winning book of the same name by Daniel Yergin.

Simple Justice—*PBS, Monday, January 18, 9-11 p.m. ET.* American Experience series drama recounting the events leading up to *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the 1954 Topeka, Kansas, case in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled school segregation unconstitutional.

Lost Kingdoms of the Maya—*Wednesday, Jan. 20, 8-9 p.m. ET.* National Geographic Special examines the ancient Mexican-Central American Mayan culture, one of the most highly developed civilizations of its time. This program and all National Geographic Specials have free off-air taping rights. Study guides are available through local public television stations.

CityKids—*ABC, Saturday, Jan. 30, 12:30-1 p.m. ET.* Entertainment/information special combines the talents of CityKids, a multicultural youth group, and Jim Hensen productions.

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, a computerized clearinghouse for children's TV and radio in Washington, D.C.

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RESOURCES

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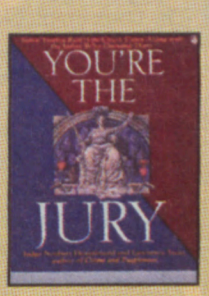
The Truth About Columbus: A Subversively True Poster Book for a Dubiously Celebratory Occasion. James W. Loewen. A detailed critique of the conventional wisdom—as expressed in U.S. history textbooks—about Christopher Columbus as hero and discoverer. 40 pp. plus 30" by 20" color poster. $12.95 from booksellers or by mail from The New Press, 450 W. 41st St., New York, NY 10036.



You're the Jury. Judge Norbert Ehrenfreund and Lawrence Treat. Gives testimony from real criminal court cases so readers can reach their own verdicts—then see how the real juries decided. Level: senior high school (some cases detail sexual relationships). 206 pp. $9.95. From booksellers or by mail order (add $1.95 p&h) from Henry Holt/Owl Books at 800/488-5233.

ART

The Art of the Handmade Book. Flora Fennimore. Shows kids how to bind together pages of their creative work—and illustrate them with cover and interior designs. Chicago Review Press. 100 pp. $11.95. From booksellers or by telephone order (add $3.50 p&h) from Independent Publishers Group at 800/888-4741.

FREE'N'CHEAP

Free Stuff for Kids. The 1993 edition of the annual book which contains "free and up-to-a-dollar things kids can send for by mail." 104 pp. $5 from booksellers; $6.50 postpaid from Meadowbrook Press, 18318 Minnetonka Blvd., Deephaven, MN 55391.

SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING

Teachers as Agents of Change: A New Look at School Improvement. Allan Glatthorn. Uses research to show how teachers can take the lead in restructuring classroom instruction, school culture and climate, systematic planning, and home-school and collegial relationships. 208 pp. Use stock no. 1853-2-10-FC to get the special prepublication price of $10.95, good through January 31, 1993 (regular price will be $16.95). NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516, 800/229-4200, FAX 203/933-5276.

PEDAGOGY

The Portfolio Approach to Assessment. Emily Grady. Suggests strategies for making evaluation of student work a part of the "learning loop." 32 pp. Fastback No. 341. $1.25 postpaid. Phi Delta Kappa, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789.

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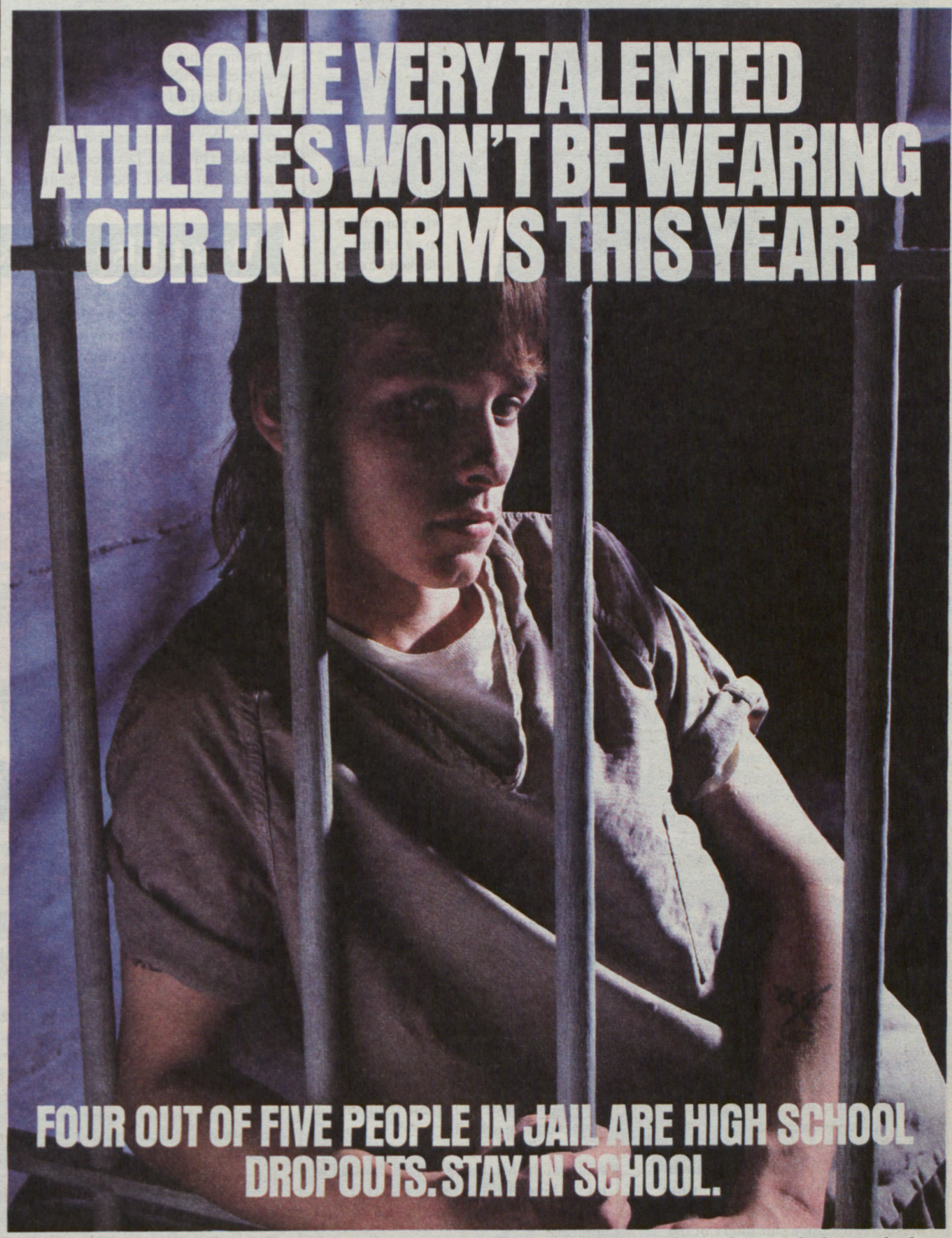
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ON THE ROAD. . .

School-Parent Team

Chapter 1 Coordinator Margaret Lee believes parents hold the key to their children's success.

Every morning, resource specialist Betty Sabo and classroom aide Shirley Jones climb into a customized 34-foot mobile home and hit the roads of Greensville County, Virginia. For the next six hours, Sabo and Jones crisscross the rural county, stopping at housing complexes, trailer courts, church and restaurant parking lots, factories, medical centers, and grocery stores.

Wherever Sabo and Jones go, parents, grandparents, even babysitters gather, eager to enter the comfortable, colorful mobile resource center and take in the information, materials, and activities that will help them become tutors for their children.

That wasn't always so. Four years ago, Greensville schools and teachers thought they'd tried everything to get parents involved, says Margaret Lee, the dynamic and creative Chapter 1 coordinator who created the Mobile Parent Resource Center. And they'd had little success.

"Research tells us education has a greater impact when parents are involved, yet we couldn't seem to get our parents—particularly those of at-risk kids—to the schools," explains Lee. "We knew our parents wanted to help their children succeed, but to do that they needed the time, resources, and skills.

"Then it dawned on me. If we couldn't get our parents to come to the schools, why not take the school out to them?"

Lee applied to the Family/School Partnership Program, a subsidiary of the federal government's Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools (FIRST). When she received a $97,000 grant, she bought a mobile unit and set about customizing it.

A look inside the van reveals cupboards filled with pamphlets on parenting stacked next to construction paper and colored pens for "make-and-take" activities. To the rear of the mobile center, a small classroom is filled with toys, books, and educational games to check out. There's a cassette recorder and instructional tapes—even a television set.

"This center creates a warm feeling for parents," says Betty Sabo, a 15-year veteran teacher who volunteered for the parent resource assignment. During each visit, Sabo can cover everything from parenting skills to creating teaching aids for use at home to how to meet with a teacher.

While Sabo works with parents, Shirley Jones, a classroom aide with 20 years experience, takes their preschool children to the classroom in the rear of the center, where she reads stories and plays games with them.

Parents have responded with enthusiasm. Three years ago, Sabo and Jones traveled the neighborhoods, knocking on doors, visiting churches. Today, the mobile center's routes are posted in the newspaper, two part-time parent volunteers make advance calls, and parents themselves often knock on their neighbors' doors once the van has arrived or drive to the center's locations.

"I wouldn't bother my neighbors if I didn't think this was important," says Gwen Chapman, who has two children in Greensville schools. "I've used a lot of the tips, and my children are really doing much better in school."

Wanda Johnson meets the resource center at the Mt. Calvary Church parking lot. "This center has shown me what I can do at home to help my children," says Johnson.

Gertrude Duke drives eight miles to Mt. Calvary Church once a month to attend what she calls "my class." Duke is a grandmother, a strong woman with a sharp wit and a twinkle in her eye.

But when it came to dealing with grandson Jason, Duke was at her wit's end. "Here he was, getting *D*'s and *F*'s and hating school, and I just didn't know how to cope with that," recalls Duke.

"But I learned how to help him, I learned how to work at solving conflicts and tutor him when he needed it—all from this class. This year, Jason couldn't wait to get back in school, and he's getting *A*'s and *B*'s."

"Since I've been coming here and taking these lessons and projects to heart," continues Mrs. Duke, "his attitudes and grades have come full circle."

"Sometimes you get too tied up to go anywhere," says Delores Johnson. "But when the mobile van comes around, you can't make excuses.

"You see, they've come to see you about your children. And if they care enough to come to my house and show

What Else Works

The TransParent School Model by Jerold P. Bauch. This 15-minute videotape shows how a two-way voice-mail system keeps parents informed about their child's schoolwork and keeps teachers in close contact with parents. Send $49.95 to NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516-0509.

The MegaSkills Education Center of the Home and School Institute, Inc. Created by Dorothy Rich, the Institute advocates parent and community involvement in education. The Center (1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036) offers workshops and resources. Contact the Center about ordering the following two books.

MegaSkills: How Families Can Help Children Succeed in School and Beyond by Dorothy Rich. This well-known book offers activities parents and children can do to make learning exciting. (Available in English or in English-Spanish).

Teachers and Parents: An Adult-to-Adult Approach by Dorothy Rich. The book emphasizes the need to work with parents as adult learners and addresses the special needs and concerns of today's parents.

Together is Better. The Hispanic Policy Development Project offers this book (available in Spanish and English) by Siobhan Nicolau and Carmen Lydia Ramos as well as a number of parent involvement publications. For more information, write HPDP, 1002 Connecticut Ave., Suite 538, Washington, DC 20036.

Sure Ways To Turn Off Parents

While school districts like Greensville County are doing everything they can to make parents feel they're welcome, some schools—often unknowingly—put parents on the sidelines.

In *Together Is Better: Building Strong Partnerships Between Schools and Hispanic Parents* (see box above), authors Siobhan Nicolau and Carmen Lydia Ramos warn educators to think about the language they use. One school actually sent out an invitation letter that read, "Mrs. X, why don't you come to our class to learn how to be a good parent."

"Schools can't design rational partnership programs until they understand who their partners will be and what their needs are," say authors Nicolau and Ramos. Here are some things they advise schools to avoid:

- ► Don't design the program to suit the convenience or tradition of the school.
- ► Don't place parents in the role of students who are being taught by the schools.
- ► Don't assume that parents have no knowledge or strengths to bring to the home-school partnership.
- ► Don't tell parents they have to change the way they're rearing their children. Instead, offer them skills that they can add to their traditional skills.

PTA President Pat Henry agrees. "Successful parent involvement programs serve the needs of the entire community—the parents, the students, and the schools," says Henry. "Reaching out to all parents is a commitment all schools should make."

—A.M.

. . .TO BETTER SCHOOLS

Makes Kids Winners

me, then I care enough to help. My son brought an *F* up to an *A*,'' adds Johnson.

The parent resource center has also improved communications among the parents. ''Parents are really talking to one another, sharing information, comparing notes,'' says Lee.

And the children? ''Preschoolers who accompany their parents are already learning that school is something important, and that teachers are there to help you learn,'' says Sabo. ''They see the pride and sense of ownership their parents show in talking about 'their school' and 'their resource center.'

''That's the feeling we want to foster and encourage,'' adds Lee. ''The school-age children think, 'I've got to be someone really important for my mom to come in and talk about my education.'''

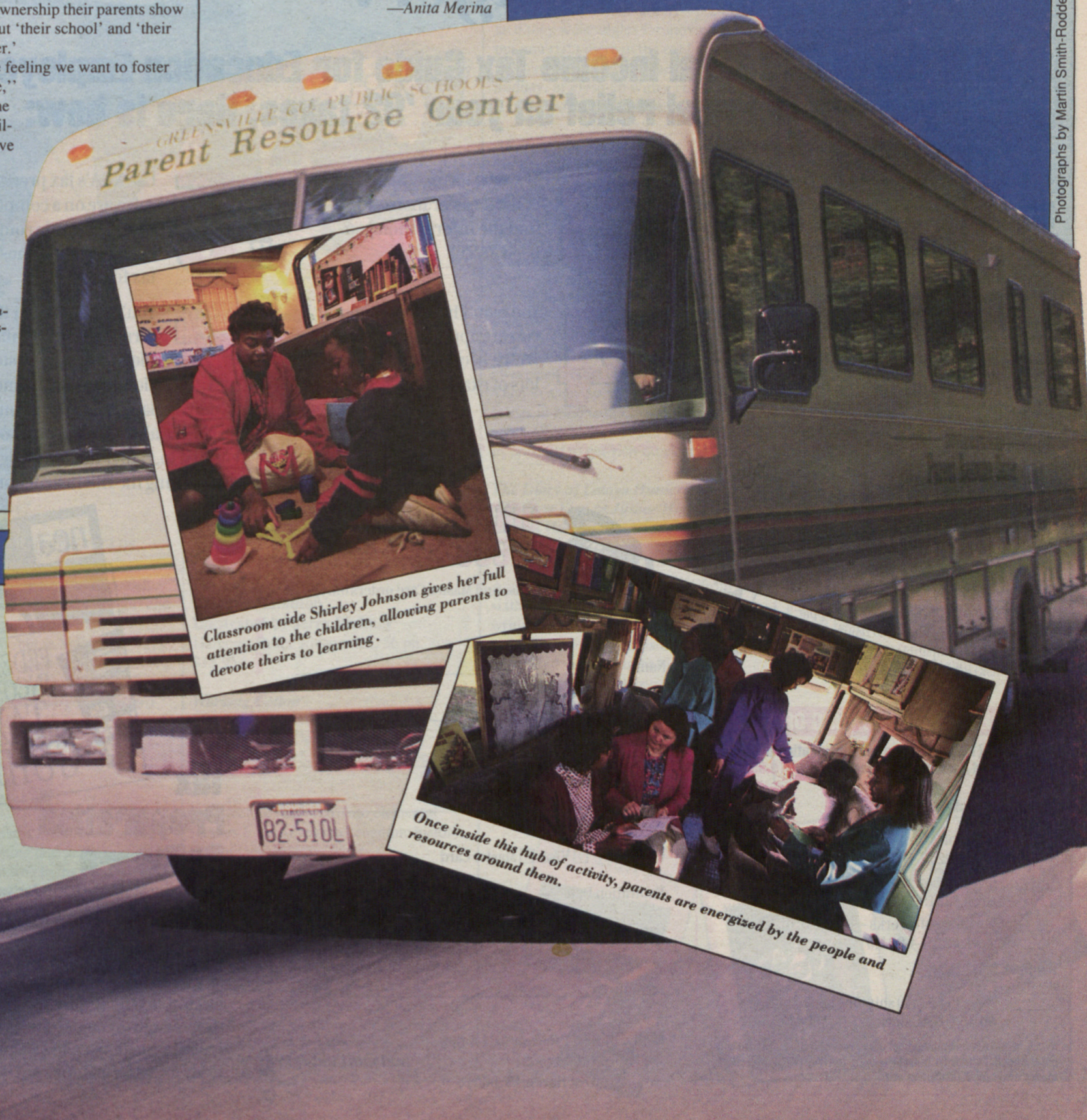
Margaret Lee isn't one to let a project stop at being successful. This year, Greensville County opened its first-ever walk-in parent resource center.

''Now,'' says Lee, ''if parents need materials or want immediate assistance, they don't have to wait until next time the mobile unit arrives in their neighborhood. They can walk right in.''

—Anita Merina

Schools in one Virginia district don't wait for parents to come to them. They take their show on the road.

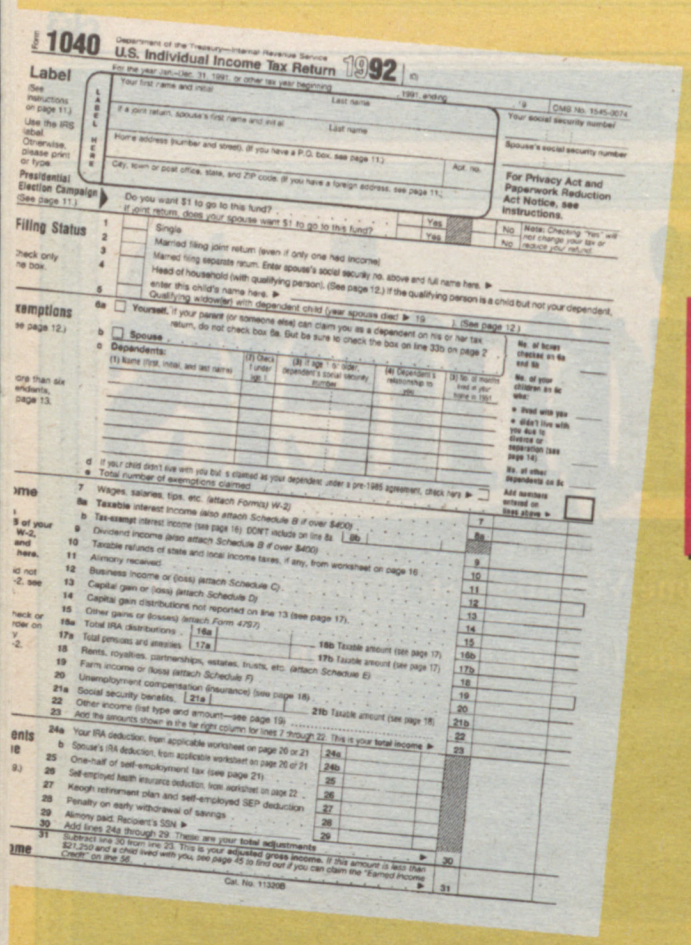
Photographs by Martin Smith-Rodden



Greensville County Schools' Parent Resource Center rolls down the highway to rendezvous with parents.

Classroom aide Shirley Johnson gives her full attention to the children, allowing parents to devote theirs to learning.

Once inside this hub of activity, parents are energized by the people and resources around them.



TAX RELIEF

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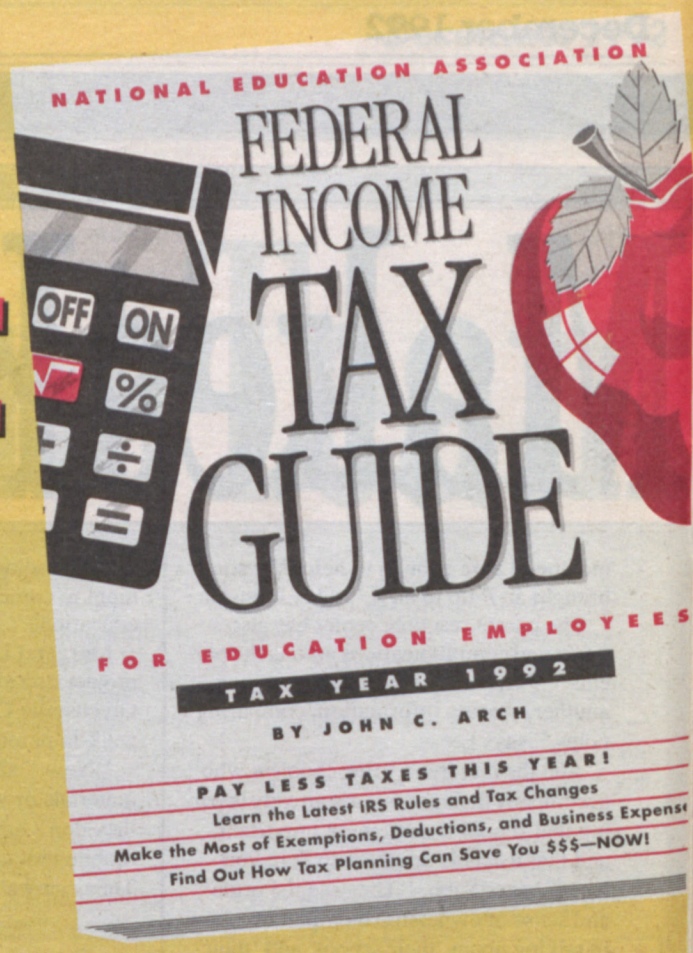
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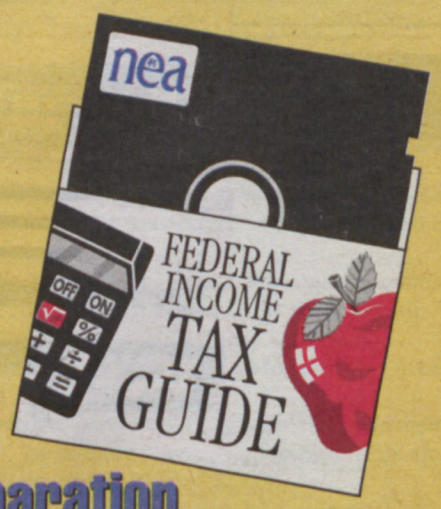

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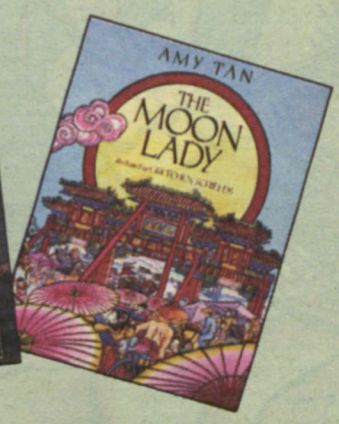
BOOK BEAT

Children's Books '92

Remarkable for Their Intensity



Among the year's new books, here are some you can admire for the intensity of their colors, characters, story, or the experience they describe.

What Do You Like?
Michael Grejniec
North-South Books. [30] pp. $14.95.

In 15 color-saturated two-page spreads, Grejniec shows alternately a little girl and a little boy liking the same thing (cats, flying, rainbows), but in individual ways. To obtain the deep color, Grejniec painted the figures in watercolor on a rough-textured paper, then enlarged them two-and-a-half times.

Morning Girl
Michael Dorris
Hyperion. 74 pp. $12.95.

It would have been a memorable month anyway for Morning Girl and her brother, Taino Indian children living on an island in what we today call the Bahamas. They lost a new sister. They lived through a hurricane. But then came the strangers who "decorated their faces with fur and wore shining rocks on their heads," as Morning Girl puts it. In Michael Dorris' subtle story, Morning Girl is the first inhabitant of the Americas to set eyes on Christopher Columbus and his crew.

The Moon Lady
Amy Tan
Illustrated by Gretchen Schields
Macmillan. [26] pp. $16.95.

Amy Tan has adapted a story from her novel *The Joy Luck Club,* set in China, about Ying-ying, a strong-willed little girl who gets lost during a special holiday that families celebrate on the water. Illustrator Gretchen Schields presents the events of the day in intricate Chinese-style pictures.

Drylongso
Virginia Hamilton
Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 56 pp. $18.95.

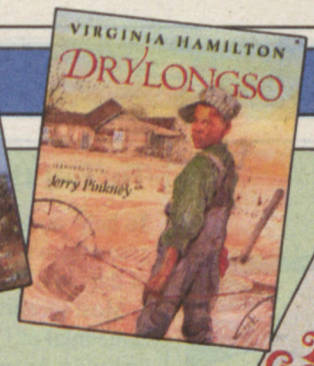
Working Cotton
Sherley Anne Williams
Illustrated by Carole Byard
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. [26] pp. $14.95.

Two picture books tap into elemental themes from American economic history: drought and migrant labor.

First, drought—"drylongso" in the Afro-American Gullah dialect, according to author Virginia Hamilton. *Drylongso* the book is about a Black American farm family caught in a drought in 1975.

"Drylongso" is also a character in the book, a mythical boy who arrives in a tornado with beat-the-drought tactics. Jerry Pinkney's combination watercolors and pastels extract the brightly colored people from their backgrounds of dust.

Then migrant labor. In *Working Cotton,* her first book for children, poet Sherley Anne Williams paints word pictures to describe a Black family's day picking cotton in California's Central Valley. The story is based on Williams' own childhood experience near Fresno, California. Carole Byard's illustrations—presented as if they were angles for movie shots—put you right there in the cold of a desert morning, in the heat of the desert at midday, or close-up with a cotton boll right in front of your face.



Alice
Whoopi Goldberg
Illustrations by John Rocco
Bantam. [46] pp. $15.

Author-actress Whoopi Goldberg "wanted to give kids a modern fairy tale they could relate to that had a Black kid in it." In this fairy tale, the Black kid is named Alice. Like an earlier Alice, this one travels with a white rabbit and a little man in a top hat. She also enters every sweepstakes that comes in with the mail. Then in a day spent fending off rip-off artists in Manhattan, Alice learns the value of good friends and high adventure as opposed to get-rich-quick schemes.

The Diary of Latoya Hunter: My First Year in Junior High
Latoya Hunter
Crown. 131 pp. $16.

A quote in the *New York Times* from her sixth grade teacher about her "incredible writing talent" got Latoya Hunter an assignment from a publisher: keep a diary of her first year in junior high.

This book is that diary: a blow-by-blow description of events in the seventh grade at J.H.S. 80 in the Bronx year before last. Here are school, family, and neighborhood life seen through the eyes of a lively, self-possessed Jamaican American teenager. What impresses most is the voice of the even-handed, detached observer, who can already say apropos of a disagreement with her parents over discipline: "I know they have their parental reasons, but I have my adolescent reasons."

Orfe
Cynthia Voigt
Atheneum. 120 pp. $12.95.

The Pigman & Me
Paul Zindel
HarperCollins. 168 pp. $14.

"When things matter too much and can't be helped"—this line from *Orfe* is as good a description as any of what both *Orfe* and *The Pigman & Me* are about.

Orfe is a retelling of the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. In Cynthia Voigt's story, "Orfe" is a legendary rock singer and composer; "Yuri," her boyfriend, a recovering drug addict. They're older than the kids who will probably read the book—college-age as opposed to middle school/junior high. But kids will like this book for its faithful rendering of a local rock scene; adults, for its willingness to take sides on the issue of drug abuse—and consign the abusers to Hades.

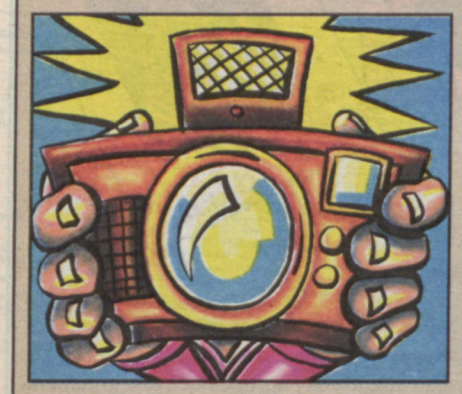
In his autobiographical book, *The Pigman & Me,* Paul Zindel treats things that "matter too much and can't be helped"—here, his insensitive, selfish mother—with his trademark manic humor.

He advises kids to watch for their own "pigman," someone who will turn up and serve as a mentor or father figure just "when you need him most." For Zindel, this was a corny old grandfather he knew as "Nonno Frankie"—who came in time and stayed long enough to give young Zindel heart.

—Nancy R. Needham
Book Review Editor

IDEA EXCHANGE

Crossing the Language Barrier



As a paraprofessional with our district's English as a Second Language Program, I recently directed a project in which our secondary students published a booklet about their personal experiences in their homelands and their impressions of America.

The booklet revealed how lonely and isolated some of the students felt because of the language barrier. This inspired Kevin Watson, a free-lance writer in our neighboring community of Bellevue, to become involved with ESL students there.

Watson distributed disposable cameras to the students and asked them to record their impressions of life in America. Each student then selected four favorite photos for Watson to display at a local community learning fair.

Eventually, Watson hopes to travel with the photo exhibit throughout the district. As he says, photos allow the students to express themselves without any barriers.

Dawn Asaf
Shorecrest High School
Seattle, Washington

To Tell the Truth

To help students learn history, our eighth grade team teachers present their version of the old TV show *To Tell the Truth*.

Most recently, because this is the quincentennial of Christopher Columbus' arrival in America, we played the game with a Columbus theme.

Three teachers covered their heads with paper bags decorated to resemble the 15th century sailors. The students took turns asking them questions and then—based on their responses—decided who was the "real" Christopher Columbus.

We concluded the program by serving a sampling of Spanish, Italian, and Native American food.

Margy Nurik
Lakeside School
Pompton Lakes, New Jersey

Teacher Conference, Hold the Mustard

My school is in the second year of a partnership with a local Burger King restaurant. This partnership helps our students and improves community relations.

The restaurant pays 10 of its employees to tutor our students once a week. In return, once every six weeks, we teachers make popcorn, take it to the restaurant, and sell it for a nominal price.

While we're there, we mingle with the customers, talking to parents and kids. They get to know us and we get to know them.

The profits we make go for school playground equipment.

Cindy Garwick
Bluemont Elementary School
Manhattan, Kansas

Science in a Sack

The students at our school have designed 28 "Science in a Sack" experiments to share with other students in our district. The project is funded by a Partners in Education grant.

We keep the experiments simple and portable—finding the mass of small rocks, for example. We plan to design new experiments every three years.

Students—the ones I teach and the ones we share our bags of tricks with—find these experiments more fun than hitting the books really hard, and they seem to retain more information about the experiments.

Holli Tangney
Johns Hill Magnet School
Decatur, Illinois

*Send your ideas—simple yet clever suggestions any educator could adopt with little effort—to Idea Exchange, **NEA Today**, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Important: please include the name of your local Association and school, subject or grade taught, and home and school phone numbers.*

Read 'Em, Cowpokes!

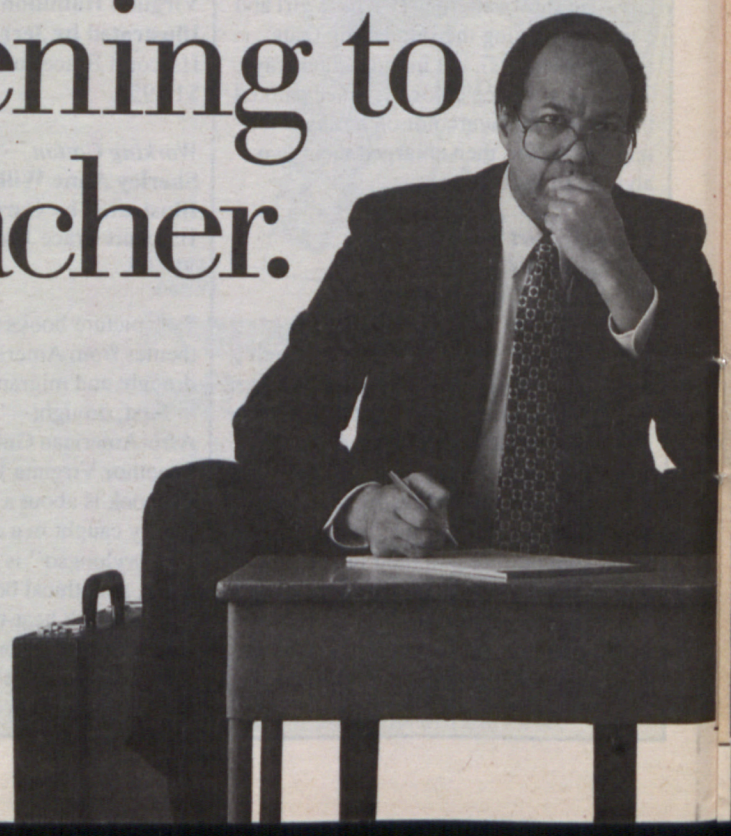
My school encourages its 385 students to read by celebrating National Readers Day each year. With a theme of "Get 'Em Reading, Pardner," each class has the goal of reading a certain number of books. If students reach their goals, they can challenge our principal to come to school riding a horse or driving a stage- coach.

During this Western Days celebration, the school also invites parents as well as children to attend performances by square dancers, trick ropers, and story tellers, and to enjoy a "good ol' fashioned" barbecue lunch.

In keeping with the theme, our hallway is decorated with a drawing of a cowboy lassoing books for students.

Kathy Long
Taft Elementary School
Enid, Oklahoma

Even as adults, we're still listening to the teacher.



IDEA EXCHANGE

Great Ideas From Teacher TV

Teacher TV, the weekly magazine-style program coproduced by NEA and the Learning Channel—will repeat programs from its spring run through December 27. The winter run of 13 new programs will start on January 17. All programs air on Sundays, 6-6:30 p.m. ET.

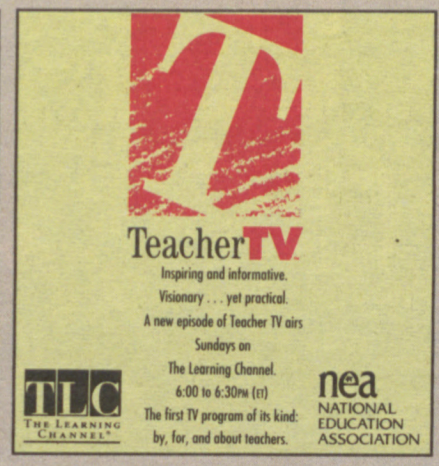
December 6: **The Making of a Teacher.** Classroom teachers are involved in innovative teacher training programs.

December 13: **Design a School.** Teachers redesign schools by combining the latest research with what they know about their own students.

December 20: **Cross-Subject Teaching.** Thematic instruction cuts across disciplines.

December 27: **Parents as Partners.** Parents support teachers and teachers support parents in everything from early-school readiness to special outreach programs for parents who don't speak English.

January 17: **Solutions that Work.** School programs offer students alternatives to violent behavior.



January 24: **High Expectations.** Teachers examine no-fail policies and help students meet high scholastic goals.

January 31: **Higher-Order Thinking Skills.** Strategies and programs help students advance from rote memorization to deep thinking.

If your cable system doesn't carry the Learning Channel, a few notes or phone calls could change that. To get the name and address of the general manager at the cable company that serves you, call 800/443-1212 and give the operator your zip code.

King Day Poster: Order Now!

The NEA again announces the availability of the "Commemorative Freedom Trail Poster/Holiday Guide." This full-color, 18" x 28", two-sided poster highlights events in the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., and suggests some activities for affiliates and members.

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday Commission will send Freedom Trail Posters/Holiday Guides at a reduced rate to NEA members. Place your order soon to get a special NEA version. When the Commission runs out of these, it will fill members' orders with its own poster (same text but no NEA identification) at the same reduced rate.

The Commission will also fill NEA members' orders for full-color 8 1/2" x 13 1/4" brochures. Also offered at a reduced price, the brochures are ideal for displaying on bulletin boards and distributing to students and participants at King holiday activities.

If you want to have the Freedom Trail Posters/ Holiday Guides early in January, place your order now.

Freedom Trail Posters/Holiday Guides

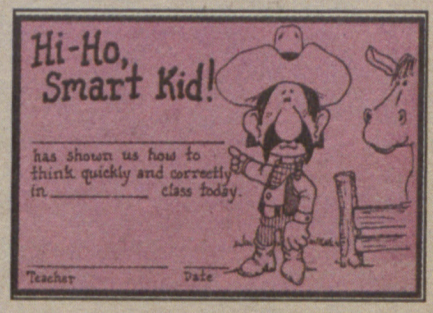
1-5	$5.00 each
6-10	$4.00 each
11 or more	$3.50 each

Freedom Trail Brochures (minimum order of 25)

25-99	$ .45 each
100-499	$ .40 each
500 or more	$ .35 each

Specify the number of posters or brochures you're ordering and combine both orders in one payment. When submitting your order, send your name, address, and phone number along with your payment by check, money order, or purchase order made payable to Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday Commission. Mail to: Freedom Trail, 8391 Main St., P.O. Box 302, Ellicott City, MD 21043. For more information, contact the National Coordinator of the Freedom Trail Project at 410/461-8329.

Art Can Be Better Than Words

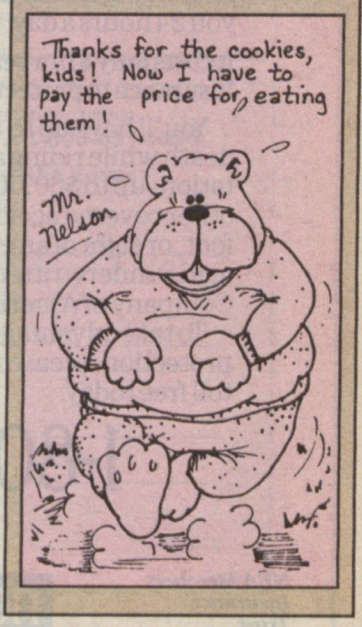


As a former free-lance artist, I get—and hold—the attention of my sixth grade students by drawing appropriate cartoons (above and below) on the chalkboard.

The cartoons make subjects like math and science much less intimidating to kids. For example, when one of my favorite classroom cartoon characters, Leroy Klutz, dips his hand into a fishbowl of hungry piranhas, he ends up with four fingers instead of five. Which means he only has four-fifths of them left. I find this a somewhat grisly, but effective, teaching technique.

I also add zest to my tests with cartoons. And I send kids animated awards and thank-yous. Drawing cartoons definitely motivates today's kids, who are tuned in to visual things, in a fun way.

Jan Nelson
Garfield Elementary School
Garfield, Minnesota



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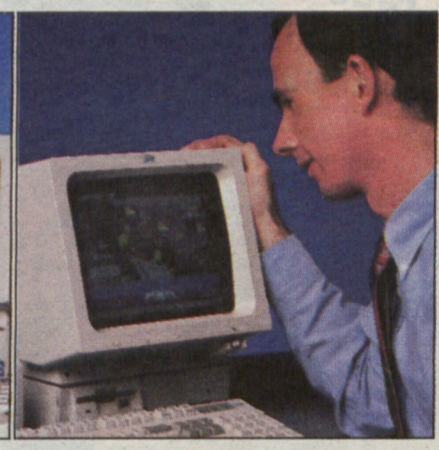

Patrick Irlbeck
English Literature
Madison, CT

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People

Kids Get Healthy Message

It's a long way from Oregon to Romania, but Oregon physical education teacher **Dave Conklin** knows that kids everywhere need to know how to exercise and eat right. Conklin—who teaches at Sunset Elementary in Hermiston—spent four weeks last summer in the Transylvanian village of Orlat, setting up a recreation program at an orphanage.

Conklin arranged to volunteer through a nonprofit organization, Future Generations. He, his wife, and their 18-year-old daughter lived at the Case de Cop Ii orphanage while leading its 137 girls, aged seven to 18, through daily athletic sessions.

These children receive only the basics, reports Conklin. They were thrilled when Conklin opened his suitcases and gave them two dozen pairs of roller skates, dozens of jump ropes, soccer balls, volleyballs, tether balls, and other equipment.

As a result of his summer in Orlat, Conklin's retirement plans have taken a new direction.

"I want to help these kids," he says. "I'd really like to build them an activities center."

For information about the project, to contribute new or used sports equipment, or to donate cash to help ship athletic equipment to Romania, contact Conklin at 220 SW Butte Drive, Hermiston, OR 97838.

Richard Nowitz

Taking Care of Care

What's on school nurses' minds these days? For an overall view, ask NEA member Elaine Taboskey Wade of Waitsfield, Vermont: She's 1992-93 president of the 6,500-member National Association of School Nurses. Wade conducts the health services program and coordinates the health education program for 500 elementary students.

"First," says Wade, "we're noticing that more and more families are losing their jobs and their insurance, or they can't afford enough insurance, so more children are depending for health care on the health programs in the school."

Wade also notes the growing integration of school and community service programs to serve whole families, often within the school itself.

Nurses are concerned about job security, too, in these hard times.

"Finally," Wade points out, "a lot of children are coming into school needing daily medical procedures, not just medication. Where nurses are too few, they have to delegate and then supervise.

"We're working with local Associations and school boards on this issue."

Chris Burdette

'I Got Married At School'

Lots of school people joke about it, but **Dawn Burstyn-Meyers** did it: last June she and television producer Lawrence Meyers got married on the steps of her very own Kenilworth School in Phoenix, Arizona.

"I love the school so much," Burstyn-Meyers explains. "It was built in 1920 and has lots of history. It looks like the Supreme Court building."

The wedding attendants were Burstyn-Meyers' first graders. They wore whatever they wanted to. The girls carried bouquets of daisies and baby's breath; the boys wore boutonnieres.

"The wedding was a learning experience for them," says Burstyn-Meyers. "They made birdseed confetti and drew pictures of what they thought I'd look like.

"They couldn't believe their teacher was kissing," she recalls.

Ironmen Tales

Imagine traveling 750 miles through mountainous terrain from Boston to Montreal and back, with little sleep, cold pasta dinners, and lots of company.

Now imagine doing it on a bike.

That's exactly what West Virginians **John Yevuta** (right) and **Charlie Sebroski** did last summer. The dynamic duo completed the 750-mile road race in 82 hours, coming in 24th in a field of 100 cyclists from 21 states, Ireland, England, France, and Canada.

Throughout the five-day period, the pair maintained their sense of humor, says Yevuta, a sixth-grade teacher at the K-8 New Martinsville School. Sebroski teaches seventh grade at the same school.

"We traveled 236 miles the first day," recalls Yevuta. "We couldn't climb stairs, were barely able to walk, and we were facing 240 miles next day. You had to laugh to keep yourself going."

The trip, grueling and exhilarating, was well worth it, say Yevuta and Sebroski, who'd prepared for months by riding up to 400 miles a week. "We learned that the human body is incredibly resilient," says Yevuta.

What's the next destination? "Well, there's a race modeled after this one: the Paris-Brest-Paris race," continues Yevuta. "We're giving that idea a spin."

John Wickline

Guy Reynolds

Comforters for Kids

Linguistics teacher **Bobbie Brinson** (Key School No. 97 in Indianapolis) has seen more than 300 quilts pass through her hands and onto the hospital beds of children in Indiana and elsewhere.

It started four years ago when Brinson sent a fan letter to Ellen Ahlgren, creator of ABC Quilts, a volunteer group that makes quilts for AIDS babies, babies affected by alcohol or drug abuse, and abandoned babies.

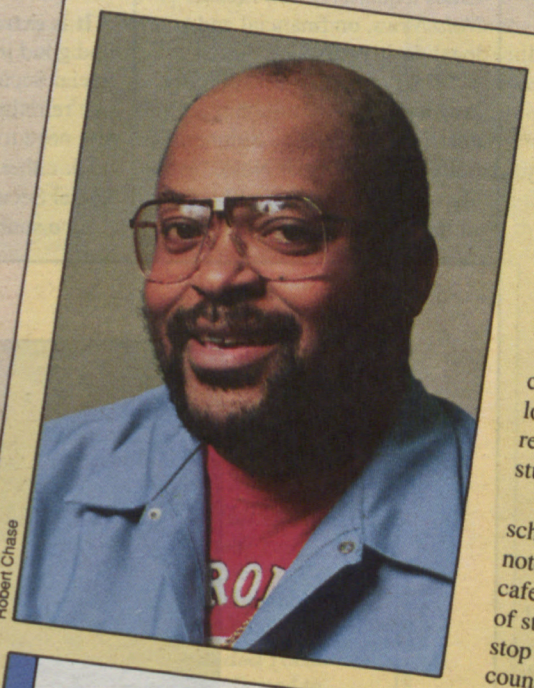
Brinson offered to help; she became the Indianapolis-area coordinator.

"Through this project, I've seen the wonderful variety of people who care about kids," says Brinson, "and the different ways of showing care. Many teachers are teaching their students both about AIDS and about serving others."

Brinson's not the only Indiana NEA member working on ABC Quilts. Donna Fleming of East High School in Columbus and Fran Hawes of Decatur's Central High School have also pitched in, with their students.

Now Brinson envisions quilting classes in lower-income neighborhoods where residents could make quilts to use or sell.

To date, ABC Quilts has distributed nearly 75,000 quilts.



Robert Chase

Custodian Of Kids

"I tell the kids they've got a good school and some great teachers," says Southfield, Michigan, custodian **Tim Smith**, "and it's on them to take advantage of that."

Smith has spent his whole career in education, driving a school bus while he was in college. Now, as head custodian at Levey Middle School, he puts in a full day with job assignments that take him from checking the boilers and unlocking the school in the morning to touching up the paint.

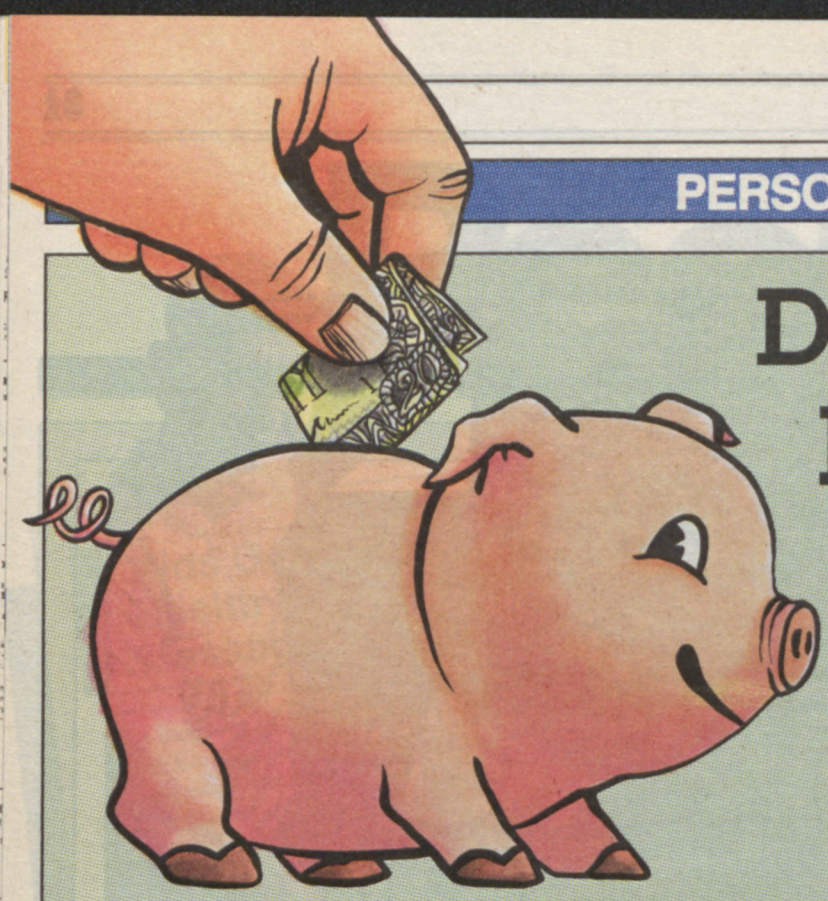
Still, like many other custodians, Smith puts a lot of stock in his relationships with the students.

"I'm around the whole school during a day," he notes. "We clean up the cafeteria after each group of students. I frequently stop by the library and the counseling center. And if I see a student in the halls during classes, I check to make sure the student has a pass.

"So students have many opportunities to come up and talk. That's my favorite part of the job," says Smith. "Talking with students—counseling. I want to make sure they get a good education.

"We have to get our kids back on track. Somehow we've got to get the message to them that they are the future—and that everything doesn't get settled with a fight."

PERSONALLY SPEAKING



Do-It-Yourself FINANCIAL PLANNING

In rough financial times, many Americans feel they simply must find a good financial planner. But the truth is, most middle-income people would be better off learning to help themselves with routine financial chores.

There are plenty of resources available free, or for a small fee, to help you do your own financial planning. And financial chores are no harder to master than other household tasks, if you can just put aside the intimidation many people feel about numbers and money.

You can get started by going to the library. Business, investing, and job search services make up about one third of the services libraries offer to adults today, according to Kristen Wick, head of library adult services at the Contra Costa County Library in Pleasant Hill, California.

Libraries have a broad range of resources to help you check up on your life insurance policy, find a good mutual fund, or learn how credit works.

But before you go, you need to do a little bit of homework. Think about what you want to accomplish.

Do you need to start from scratch with ways to organize your records and prepare a balance sheet and budget? The librarian can help you find recent magazine articles on these topics.

Or do you have a specific chore, such as finding a mutual fund that will make a good return on a $1,000 investment?

Stop first at the information desk, Wick suggests. Expect the librarian to ask lots of questions, and prepare to ask plenty of your own. "Librarians deal with questions all day long, from the sublime to the ridiculous," Wick says. "There's no such thing as a stupid question. If you ask the question, we can help you get to the index or guide that you need."

Many libraries today have a business specialist, Wick says. Most subscribe to a wide variety of personal finance and investing publications, as well as reference books like Morningstar Mutual Funds, which helps evaluate individual stocks.

You may be able to arrange for a tour of the business reference section if you put together a group of five or six people. Wick also suggests that you reserve books on financial planning: they're very popular and may not be on the shelves.

There are also other places to go for low-cost, basic information. Nolo Press in Berkeley, California (510/549-1976), publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Nolo News*, on financial and legal do-it-yourself projects.

"The newsletter always has a lead issue, like rebuilding credit," says JoAnne Skinner, publicity director of Nolo. "We also review a number of books in these areas." A two-year subscription costs $12.

Nolo also publishes a number of good books. *Stand Up to the IRS*, by Frederick W. Daily (250 pages, $19.95), is actually a guide that leads you through the audit process and helps you understand what your rights are and how you can be treated fairly. Another Nolo book, *Divorce and Money*, by Violet Woodhouse and two coauthors (288 pages, $19.95), explains how to evaluate family assets and divide them at divorce.

It is extremely difficult to find good information on the Social Security system. If you're retired or about to retire, you need to get a good reference book rather than relying on the Social Security Administration.

One source to consider is the 1992 *Mercer Guide to Social Security & Medicare* (Independent Publisher's Group, Chicago, $6.95).

A couple of other books that you may want in your library:

- *Making the Most of Your Money*, by Jane Bryant Quinn (Simon & Schuster, 1991, $27.50). This 934-page book sets out to cover everything you need to become your own financial planner.
- *Dictionary of Finance and Investment Terms*, and, perhaps *Dictionary of Insurance Terms*, both by Barron's Educational Series and both $8.95. These books can be helpful when you're struggling with terms you find in your employee benefits handbook or in the business section of the newspaper.

—Mary Rowland

Some Member Benefits

NEA Member Benefits (formerly NEA Special Services) provides some valuable resource material, free of charge:

- *Homeowner's Insurance*, a 30-page guide on the subject.
- "Understanding Credit" a free brochure that discusses the importance of a good credit rating and how to establish one.
- *Tax-Deferred Annuities*, a 40-page consumer guide that discusses how 403(b) retirement plans work, as well as the investment options available.

Member Benefits also publishes an annual study, the NEA Member Benefits Tax-Deferred Annuity Study, that analyzes the performance of 70 fixed and variable annuities. The study costs $25, but a reference copy is available at each state affiliate office.

Among the expanded services of NEA Member Benefits are free financial planning seminars, a CD investment program, and a mortgage life/unemployment insurance program.

To request Member Benefits publications or to inquire about programs, call toll-free 800/637-4636.

Every day we light up thousands of them. Two at a time.

TRENDS

The Family-Friendly Workplace

Growing numbers of employers are now offering employee-friendly and, specifically, family-friendly benefits.

Almost half the 624 employers polled recently by the College Placement Council say they offer wellness programs, and 34 percent report providing recreational facilities.

Forty-five percent of the employers polled offer employees the option of flextime, and 41 percent allow them to take leaves of absence to care for family members.

As for kid-friendliness, some 28 percent of the employers reimburse employees for their dependent care costs; 11 percent provide child care facilities; and 10 percent give a child care subsidy.

Going out to Work

Labor force analysts foresee the further disappearance of the stay-at-home Mom. The Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor projects that 15 million women will enter the work force between 1990 and 2005, a 26 percent increase in the number of women workers.

This movement towards the workplace, says the Women's Bureau, will be greatest among Hispanic and Asian women, whose numbers in the labor market will increase by 80 percent. The labor force growth of Black women—34 percent—will also exceed the average for all women.

The number of white women workers will grow by only 23 percent, but the proportion of white women who go out to work (63.5 percent) is expected to exceed the figure for Black women (61.7 percent) for the first time in U.S. history.

By 2005, women will make up 47 percent of the total work force, up from 38 percent in 1970. The percentage of working age women who are actually working or looking for work is also expected to rise, while for men that figure will continue its slow decline.

A Good Read

Doomsayers, back off! A new international study says U.S. students are among the world's best readers. The

study, the largest so far, analyzed results of a test given to 210,000 9- and 14-year-olds in 31 countries.

Conducted by the Netherlands-based International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, the study reports that Finnish students did best at both ages. Among 9-year-olds, Americans finished second; among the 14-year-olds, the Americans followed the French, Swedes, and New Zealanders by a slim margin.

Girls performed better than boys in all countries at age 9, and in all but two at 14. Another finding: Kids who watch more than 3 1/2 hours of television a day are less likely to read well. Also, U.S. students do well on prose, but not so well on maps and charts.

More Kids Shot to Death

The second most common cause of death among older teenagers is gunshot wounds, reports the American Medical Association. And the rate is rising fast: for homicides, from 7 per 100,000 for 15-to-19-year-olds in 1987 to 11 per 100,000 in 1989 (the latest available figure). Even the older teens' suicide rate from gunshots rose from just under 6 to just under 7 per 100,000 in the same two years.

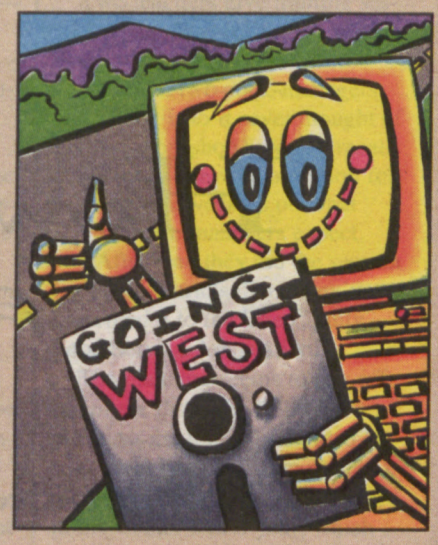
In the inner city, rates of gun homicide rose 28 percent during that period, while the suburban rate rose 23 percent. For white youngsters in the inner city, the increase was 30 percent.

About 6 percent of high school students say they bring handguns to school, and 2 percent say they own a gun and have fired it at someone.

Vigorous public information efforts and stiffer licensing requirements cut the automobile accident death rate for older teens from 44 to 34 per 100,000 between 1979 and 1989. Medical authorities advocate similar measures to cut the gunshot death rate. (See student health, page 29.)

Technology's Trailblazers

The westward journey has lost its perils, but innovators apparently still head for the Pacific Coast. When it comes to "techno-philes," the Western states lead



the pack, says a recent market-research survey.

Technophiles are the Americans who are the most likely to own or to use personal computers, fax machines, and cellular phones.

Some 20 percent of consumers in Western states are classified as among the first to buy and use new high-tech products. The proportion drops to 17 percent in the Northeast and 16 percent nationwide.

One likely explanation for the technophiles' high-tech tastes: more than half say they work from their homes. Another factor may be household demographics: these innovators are likely to be between the ages of 35 and 49, in the group most likely to have teen-age children.

Poorest of Poor

Shannon County, South Dakota, has the highest rate of poverty of all the nation's 3,141 counties, according to the latest available statistics from the Census Bureau.

More than 6 in 10 residents of Shannon County, which includes the Pine Ridge Reservation, the home of the Oglala branch of the Sioux Indians, earn incomes below the poverty line. The national poverty rate is about 14 percent.

For 1989, the Census Bureau set the poverty threshold at $6,311 a year for one person and $12,675 for a family of four.

Rounding out the top five poorest counties are: Starr, Texas; East Carroll, Louisiana; Tunica, Mississippi; and Holmes, Mississippi.

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How often does a teacher get a standing ovation?

Sometimes it can take years for students to truly appreciate a great classroom performance. That is why, for the third consecutive year, The Walt Disney Company has reserved a special spotlight for teachers. On December 6, at 7 p.m. ET/PT, we present The American Teacher Awards to pay tribute to all of you men and women who play such a very important part in shaping our future. Hosted by some of Hollywood's top celebrities and featuring profiles of 36 outstanding teachers, this live presentation will air during The Disney Channel's free holiday preview. It's an opportunity for all of us to join in on some overdue applause.

The Walt Disney Company
presents
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Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work

Jim McCoy

Food service workers (left to right) Marge Casullo, Ginny Park, and Toni Cavnaugh are popular presenters of workshops in their field.

In-Service For Everybody

When a New York teacher and teacher aide donned new hats to run a staff development center, an entire school district found fresh vitality.

Losing state aid almost always means disaster. But when the Kenmore–Town of Tonawanda School District lost state funding for its teacher center, both employees and board saw a chance to build new creativity and unity.

After four years serving teachers, the center emerged in the fall of 1991 as the Kenmore Staff Development Center, offering courses to all district employees. That change transformed not only the Center, but education in its Buffalo-area schools as well.

"Since the Center program began, we've seen not only professional and personal growth," notes the Center's assistant director, Linda Bloniarz, "but more staff collegiality, creative problem-solving, and shared decision making.

"We've seen new levels of trust and loyalty."

The moment was right for the change. All three of the district's unions—teacher, support staff, and administrator—had bargained contracts giving their members the right to training that would translate into salary and career advancement. And the superintendent and school board were ready to move ahead—and to fund the program.

Since then, teachers and noninstructional staff, including administrators, have always had a choice of more than 100 courses ranging in length from a two-hour workshop to five three-hour sessions.

Some of the sessions are designed for employees in just one type of job. Others attract participants from very different fields. One course on relationships, for example, enrolled food service personnel, building and grounds staff, teachers aides, other support staff, a principal, and a psychologist, as well as teachers.

Other popular courses deal with coping with co-workers, self-confidence in public speaking, balancing work and family in the '90s—"things that can help in the workplace," Bloniarz points out—besides professional topics: cooperative discipline, time management, and computer technology.

A computer course has become a regular favorite because the district's recently switched hardware.

The Center's program is planned by Director Sam Alaimo, a former teacher who headed the teacher center, and Bloniarz, a former teacher aide.

"I've served as secretary of the Kenmore-Tonawanda School Employees Association (KTSEA)," explains Bloniarz, "and Sam was a science teacher. So we know the work the school employees do and the in-service they need."

But the Center staff don't just rely on their own expertise in setting up the courses. Through a monthly newsletter, Bloniarz and Alaimo ask employees to suggest topics they'd like to study and possible workshop presenters.

Using these suggestions and their own ideas, the two plan a set of workshops. Then committees of support staff, teachers, and administrators review the proposal and suggest changes.

The program also benefits from course evaluations. After each course, participants are asked to rate its quality. The Center is now conducting a full-scale evaluation, surveying every district staff member and interviewing some about how the Center can be most useful.

Many workshop presenters are district employees, who get a choice of compensation: either the same stipend an outside presenter would receive or 1.5 times as many professional credits as the course participants will earn.

Two teachers give training sessions for staff preparing to present a workshop for the first time.

"We had two cook-managers and a cook who'd never thought of giving a workshop before," recalls Bloniarz. "They did a session for food-service workers on what school lunch managers expect.

"After that, they did the session for other districts. Now they've presented it to the Erie County Food Service Association."

The planning seems to pay off: out of the district's 1,300 employees (about evenly divided between teachers and support staff), over 1,050 took part in workshops in the Center's first year, which ended June 30. Over the past summer, 802 employees—including half the support staff—attended workshops.

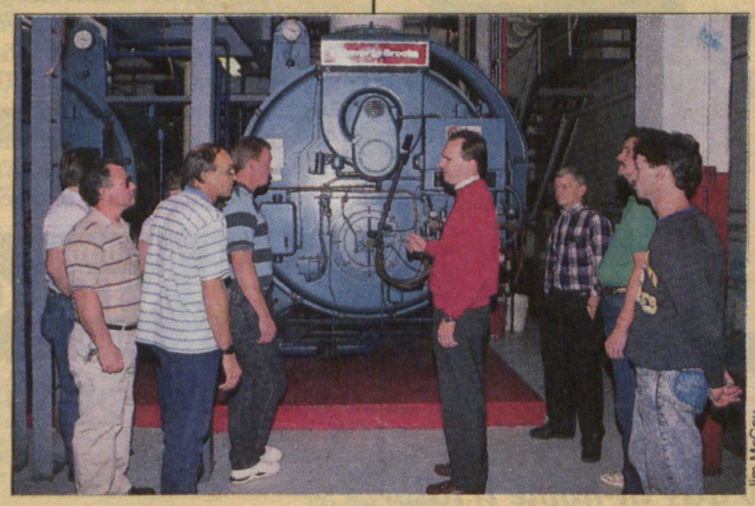
Participants take the courses on their own time. They also pick up some of the costs: $4 for each hour of instruction, up to $69 a year.

At the same time, they receive career incentives for the courses they take. For example, under the KTSEA contract, a permanent school employee receives a $750 stipend ($375 for part-time workers) at the end of each fiscal year in which the employee successfully completes a career improvement program, either at the Center or elsewhere.

The Center's policy board typifies its overall approach: members represent the employee groups, the central office, business, private schools, and parents.

"Everyone is a professional in what they do," Bloniarz emphasizes. "Every staff member's work is important, and everyone has an equal chance here."

—Jane Power



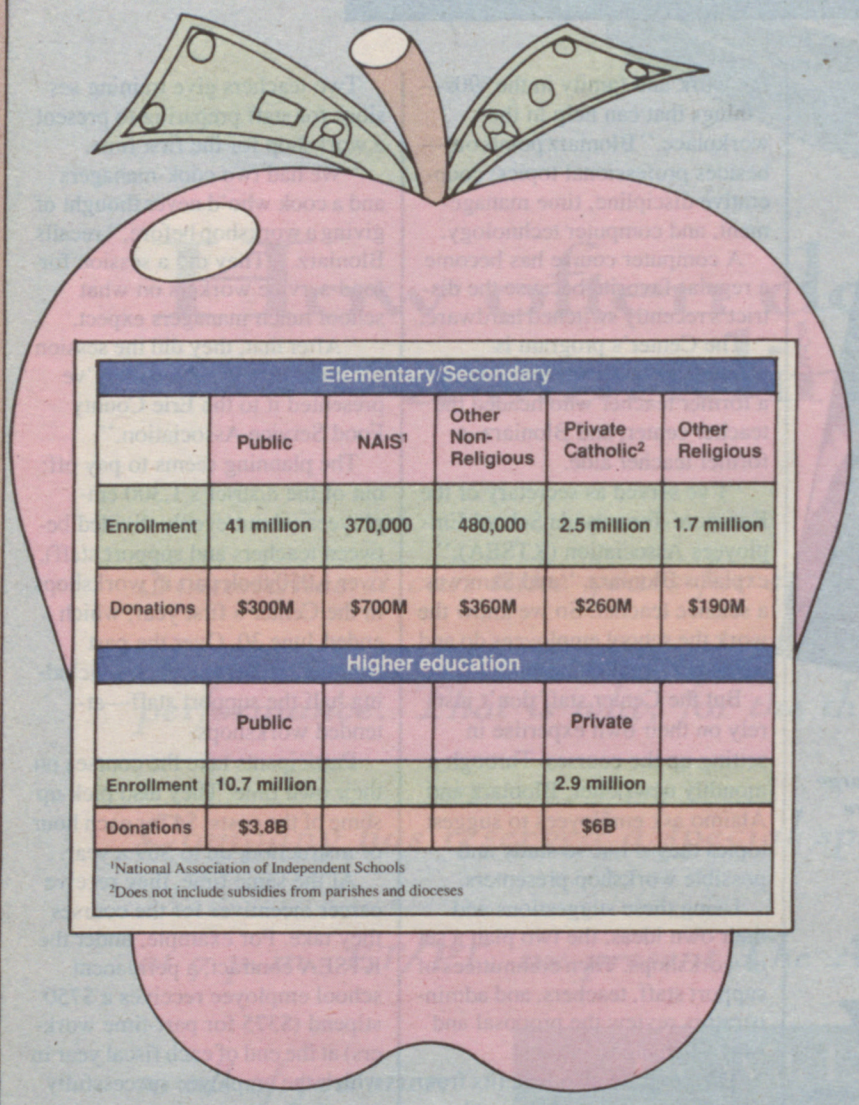
Jim McCoy

Association member Andrew Sako (center) of Erie Community College makes a point about boilers. Sako heads the College's Building Management and Maintenance Department.

DATA BANK

Voluntary Support

If you think Americans have been directing more donations to public schools lately, you'd be right. Here's how much the public is giving to public schools—and, for contrast, to private ones.



Elementary/Secondary					
	Public	NAIS[1]	Other Non-Religious	Private Catholic[2]	Other Religious
Enrollment	41 million	370,000	480,000	2.5 million	1.7 million
Donations	$300M	$700M	$360M	$260M	$190M
Higher education					
	Public			Private	
Enrollment	10.7 million			2.9 million	
Donations	$3.8B			$6B	

[1]National Association of Independent Schools
[2]Does not include subsidies from parishes and dioceses

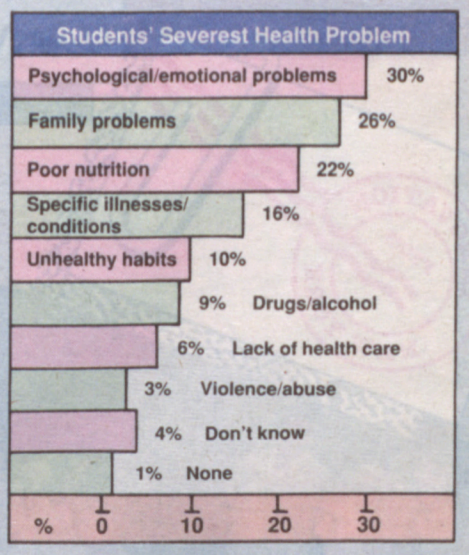
Source: Council for Aid to Education

Teachers Worry About Kids' Health

Student health problems are increasing, say two out of three teachers recently surveyed by the nation's pediatricians and the National PTA. And these problems are affecting students' concentration, their ability to understand the material, their behavior, and their social skills.

More than 80 percent of the teachers say their schools are trying to alleviate the problems by providing instruction in good health practices, nutritious meals, and on-site health screenings.

Teachers say these problems are worst:



Where Sports Are Big

Budget cuts are forcing some schools to make students pay to play sports, others to drop sports entirely. Still, last year the most high schoolers took part in interscholastic sports since 1977-78.

High School Athletes in 1991-92

Texas	479,750
California	461,794
New York	291,591
Ohio	274,224
Michigan	262,453
Illinois	252,808
Pennsylvania	211,106
New Jersey	177,064
Washington	152,722
Florida	150,487

Source: National Federation of State High School Associations

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How Schools Shortchange Girls

The AAUW Report

Gender bias in the '90s? You bet! Is there tacit encouragement of sexual harassment in your school? Probably. Research shows that girls are not receiving the same quality, or even quantity, of education as boys. As restructuring moves forward, the gender issue *must* be part of the discussion. See how you and your colleagues measure up in respect to gender sensitivity in and out of the classroom. A joint publication of the American Association of University Women and the National Education Association.

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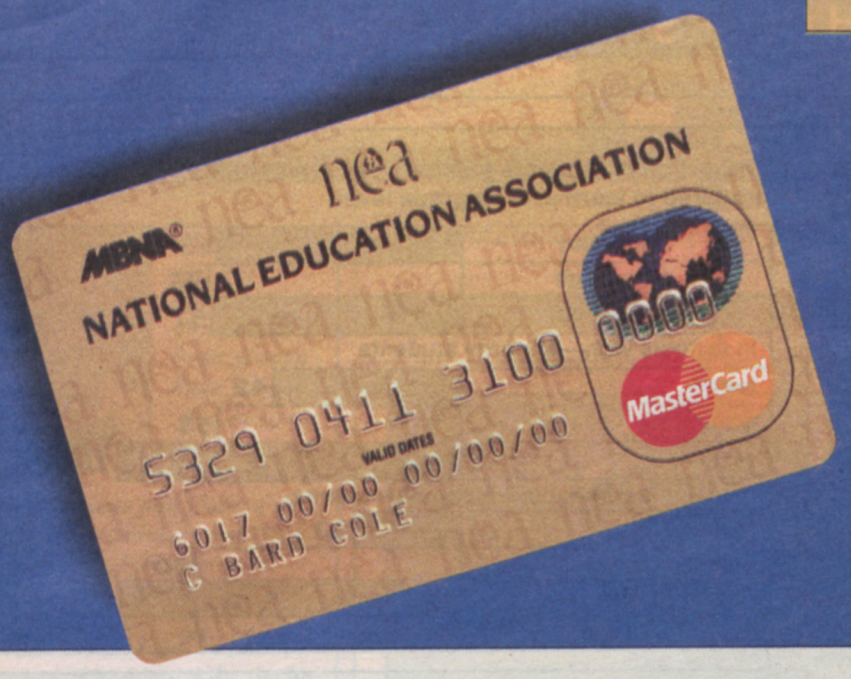

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† New program participants only. For members currently in the program, the annual fee will not be assessed until the anniversary date of your current account. (See disclosure box on application.)

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Please Print

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First M.I. Last

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone ( ) _____ Work Phone ( ) _____

_____ _____
Social Security No. Date of Birth

Mother's Maiden Name or Code Word _____
(For identification when you request special action taken on your account.)

EMPLOYER INFORMATION

Employer _____

Position _____

Years There _____ Annual Salary*$ _____

Previous Employer or School Attended _____

State Association _____

Other Income*$ _____ Source _____

* Alimony, child support, spousal income, or separate maintenance income need not be revealed if you do not wish it considered as a basis of repayment.

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Current Credit Card Accounts (if applicable):

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American Express® Account No. _____

Are you: ☐ Renting ☐ Own ☐ Buying Monthly Payment $ _____

Previous Address _____
(Must be completed if at present address less than 3 years.)

I have read this application, and everything I have stated in it is true. MBNA America Bank, N.A. is authorized to check my credit, employment history or any other information and to report to others such information and credit experience with me. I understand that the acceptance or use of any card issued will be subject to the terms of this application and the Credit Card Agreement that will be sent with the card, and agree to be responsible for all charges incurred according to such terms. By signing this application, I certify that I am a member in good standing of the National Education Association.

X _____
Applicant Signature Date

CO-APPLICANT ONLY (Please print)

Co-Applicant's Name _____
(Over 18 years of age.)

_____ _____
Social Security No. Relationship

Employer _____

Years there _____ Position _____

Work Phone ( ) _____ Annual Income*$ _____

I have read this application, and everything I have stated in it is true. MBNA America Bank, N.A. is authorized to check my credit, employment history or any other information and to report to others such information and credit experience with me. I understand that the acceptance or use of any card issued will be subject to the terms of this application and the Credit Card Agreement that will be sent with the card, and agree to be responsible for all charges incurred according to such terms.

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Co-Applicant Signature Date

† Annual Fee	$15 Gold Card/$9 School Days Card (Fee waived first year, rebated if $3,000 is charged during any subsequent year.)
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Grace Period for Repayment of Balances for Purchases	At least 25 days from statement closing date.
Method of Computing the Balance for Purchases	Average Daily Balance (including new purchases)
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RESEARCH CLUES

BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Are today's students coming to class ready to learn?

More than half the 1,000 teachers queried in a recent Metropolitan Life Insurance poll said that more than one-quarter—and in many cases, half or all—of their students are unprepared for learning at their grade level. And 82 percent agree that many of their students come to school with so many problems that it's difficult for them to be good students. (See charts at right.)

Those figures increase dramatically as the proportion of minority and lower-income students increases.

Of 10 specific problems listed in the survey, teachers named one above all the rest. Nearly two-thirds of Met-Life respondents cited lack of parental support as a serious limitation on their students' ability to learn. Among other hindrances cited: poverty, poor nutrition, violence in the school, physical or psychological abuse, poor health, drug or alcohol problems, and problems with the English language.

Are teachers prepared to deal with these problems? Apparently not. Fewer than one-third said their education and training prepared them to help students with the problems they reported.

And though schools are putting more emphasis on tackling some of the problems, such as nutrition and language learning, other problems haven't been addressed.

Given these statistics, American teachers *and* families need to learn how to overcome these barriers that currently make achieving the nation's first educational goal—preparedness for learning—a virtual impossibility.

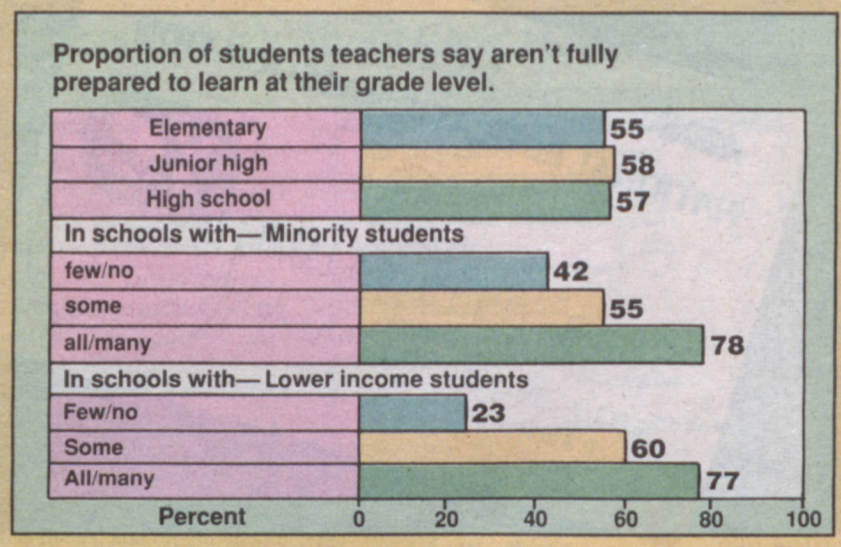
Special Ed Report

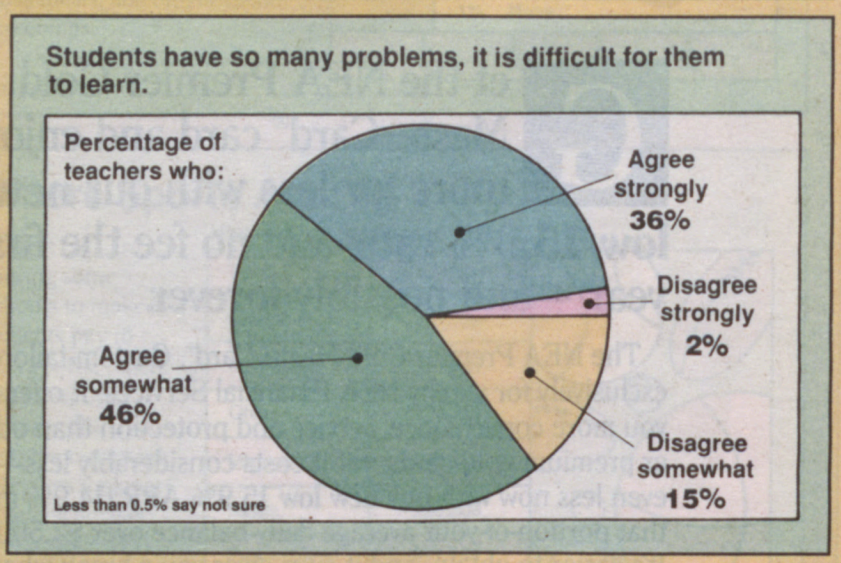
A new report to Congress, *Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, claims that nearly 10 percent of all students ages 6-21 are enrolled in special education.

The report lists the following categories of disabilities and the proportion of special education students in each category:

Specific learning disabilities 50%
Speech or language impairments 23%
Mental retardation 12%
Serious emotional disturbance 9%
Hearing, visual, orthopedic, or other health impairments 6%.

—*Anita Merina*




Students have so many problems, it is difficult for them to learn.
Percentage of teachers who:
Agree strongly 36%
Disagree strongly 2%
Agree somewhat 46%
Disagree somewhat 15%
Less than 0.5% say not sure

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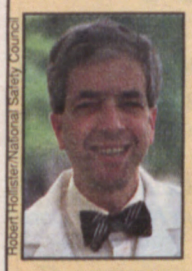
Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn


Robert Hollister/National Safety Council

Dr. Mark Widome is a professor of pediatrics at the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine in Hershey. He's the immediate past chair of the Committee on Injury and Poison Prevention of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

KIDS AND ACCIDENTS

What are the most common causes of accidental deaths for youngsters?
Most fatal injuries are caused by motor vehicles. Among kids aged five to nine, for example, we see 500 die each year from being struck by automobiles. Another 350 to 400 children in that age range are killed while riding in automobiles.

What are other leading causes of accidental death for young children?
Drownings. Fires. Bicycle accidents. But let me give you the really shocking statistic: Every year we're seeing more than 100 in that age group murdered—most often by gunshot.

What are the most common causes of fatal injuries to adolescents?
The largest percentage of unintentional injury deaths among older teenagers in this country occurs among those who are driving or riding in motor vehicles.

What are the other major causes?
They're about the same as for younger children: the top three are traffic injuries, drowning, and house fires. A fourth cause—death by gunshot—includes both unintentional and intentional injuries.

How does the number of injury deaths among young people compare to deaths from disease?
Beginning with our first birthday, injuries are the leading cause of death for the next 36 years. It's only as we approach our 40th birthday that disease becomes a more likely cause of death.

Among school-age children, injuries account for half of all deaths. Motor vehicles alone kill twice as many children as does cancer.

What kinds of injuries do kids typically suffer at school?
Kids have all kinds of injuries—from minor bumps, bruises, scrapes, and cuts to sprains, bone fractures, and serious head injuries.

How can school employees help prevent accidents at school?
One important step that can make the school environment safer is to check what surface is below the playground equipment.

That surface is critical because kids fall from swings and climbing equipment. How badly they're injured when they hit the ground depends on how soft the surface is.

In an awful lot of school playgrounds in this country, the surface underneath the equipment is asphalt or some other material that will cause serious head injuries to kids who fall.

For some years, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and a variety of other organizations have been recommending that playground designers put a loose, soft material like mulch or shredded tires beneath playground equipment.

What else can school employees do to help prevent accidents?
School personnel should insist that everybody who rides a bike to and from school wear a bike helmet. A vast majority of the 600 deaths a year that are caused by bicycle accidents could be prevented if the bicyclists had been wearing helmets.

Are some toys a problem for school-age youngsters?
Yes—I think teachers need to be aware of the toys their students bring to school.

Toys that are hazardous for school-age children are those that have sharp edges, those that have moving parts that can pinch, and those that shoot projectiles. And all electrical toys that plug in are potentially hazardous.

But beyond toys, some kids chew on things like ballpoint pens and erasers. School employees should be aware that children doing this can easily choke, so that kind of activity should be discouraged.

What about choking on food? Is this a major concern?
It's important to realize that children of any age can choke on chunks of food if they don't chew properly.

To cut down on that possibility, we shouldn't let kids run and play and eat at the same time. School lunch should take place in the school cafeteria, with children sitting on chairs and eating from tables.

Is the Heimlich Maneuver still the best way to help someone who chokes on food? Should all teachers know it?
Yes. In fact, I think all school employees should take a basic life support course, which would include learning the Heimlich Maneuver.

The life support course is available in many communities through the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, and community hospitals.

If you can do the Heimlich, you may be able to rescue someone who's either collapsed or stopped breathing.

Are there other precautions staff can take in the school?
The school's a pretty safe environment to start with, but I have some concerns.

One is that educators not permit students to move heavy equipment such as tall audiovisual carts that have a television on the top and a VCR underneath. In too many cases, those carts have overturned and seriously injured, even killed students.

How can education employees help make students' lives safer outside school?
Schools ought to develop comprehensive education programs that speak candidly to kids about health issues.

One part of the program should emphasize the importance of wearing seatbelts at all times to reduce the risk of serious injury in auto accidents.

Also, kids should receive the latest information about the injuries and deaths associated with alcohol and drug abuse.

Are there other topics kids need to learn about?
Firearms definitely deserve an equally candid discussion. Most of kids' exposure to firearms is through television fiction, but the effects of these fictional shootings on people are never communicated.

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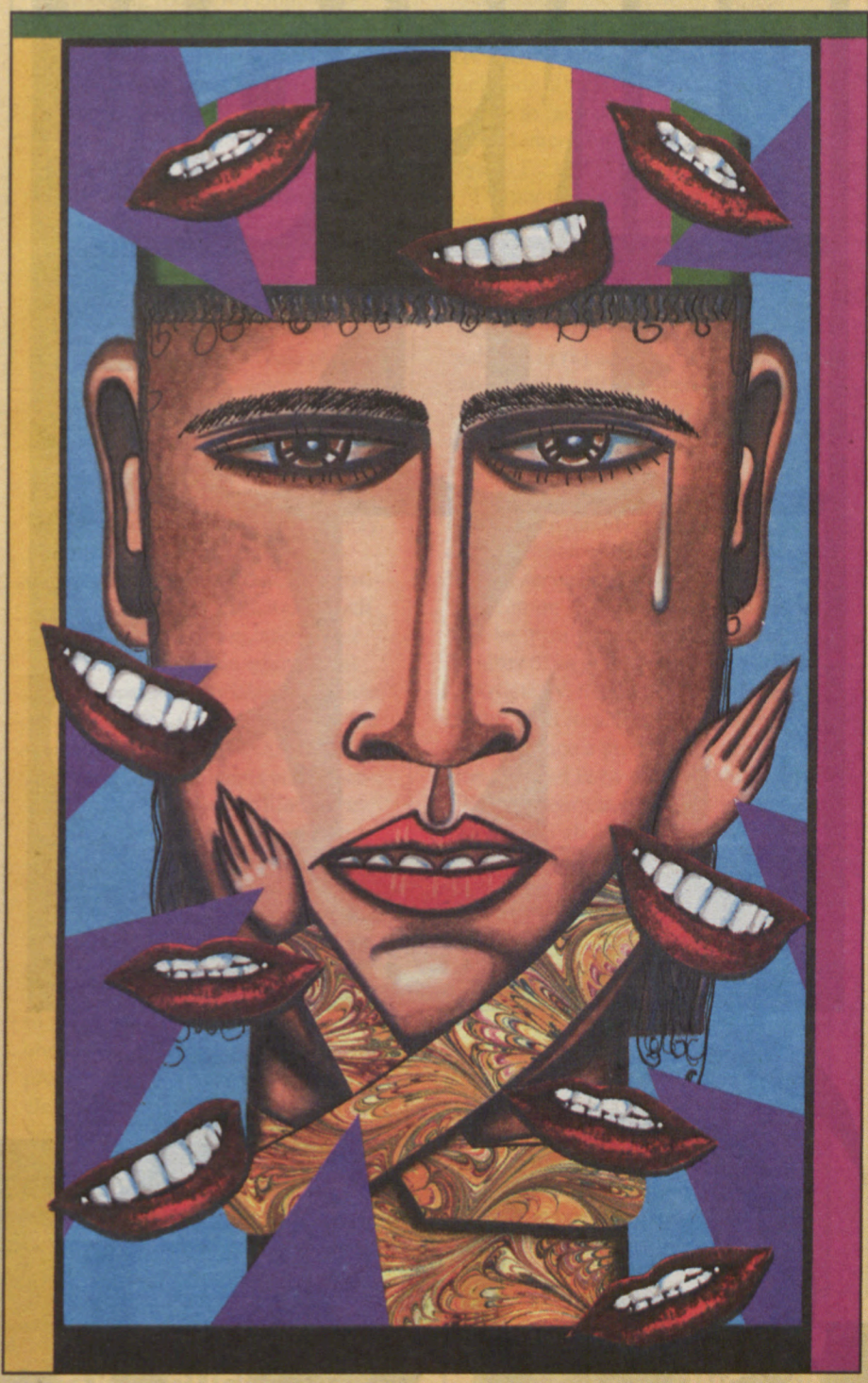
LEGAL TIMES

At Long Last, Justice Is Done



Five years ago, a principal referred to a NEA member in Kentucky as "our resident nigger." Years later, a federal court ordered the Kentucky Education Association to pay the principal $1 million! Luckily, there's more to the story.

"Ms. Reddy, have you met Sylvia Covington, our resident nigger?" That's how Robert Eaton, a white elementary school principal in Newport, Kentucky introduced a new teacher to NEA member Sylvia Covington in June 1987.

That introduction—made in front of a student and other employees—triggered a series of events: protest marches, Eaton's dismissal and reinstatement, and a lawsuit that culminated in a $1 million jury verdict in favor of Eaton and against the Kentucky Education Association and local UniServ Director William Gist.

How did Robert Eaton come out on top? Covington worked in the media center at Owens Elementary School and was the only African-American employee in the school. Embarrassed and upset after the "resident nigger" remark, she consulted with two supervisors, telephoned the school superintendent, and followed up with a formal letter of complaint.

Eaton responded by sending Covington a letter claiming that the remark was intended as "good-natured jest."

The superintendent scheduled a meeting to discuss the incident, and Covington asked UniServ Director Gist to accompany her.

At the meeting, Covington maintained that Eaton's letter to her didn't adequately resolve the matter and asked for a public apology by Eaton in front of the school board and the school staff.

Gist argued that Eaton had violated a board policy prohibiting employees from publicly belittling others and urged the superintendent to consider firing Eaton.

Eaton claimed he'd had a friendly relationship with Covington over the years, and that they'd frequently traded racial barbs. While Covington confirmed this, she emphasized that Eaton had never before called her a "nigger" and that she'd been genuinely hurt and insulted by his remark.

Eaton refused to make a public apology, so the superintendent decided to take the matter up with the Newport Board of Education at its July meeting.

Parents and teachers organized a rally in support of Covington at the board office just before the meeting. The crowd carried signs and protested vocally, some urging that Eaton be fired. Gist spoke to the crowd and was identified in the local newspaper as a KEA representative.

The school board that night voted unanimously to suspend Eaton without pay and to schedule a dismissal hearing for the next month. Eaton chose to have a public rather than a private hearing, and a large crowd attended. Some members of the audience displayed KEA placards supporting Covington.

Eaton had a lawyer represent him in the two-day adversarial hearing. In the end, the school board voted 3-2 to dismiss him. He appealed his dismissal to state court, which affirmed the board's action.

The Kentucky Court of Appeals reversed, however, and ordered Eaton reinstated with full back pay. The court held that, in the circumstances, Eaton's "resident nigger" comment did not constitute "belittling" an employee, but merely bantering.

While the state court case involving Eaton's dismissal was pending, Eaton filed a civil rights lawsuit in federal court against Covington, Gist, KEA, the school board, and the superintendent.

Eaton claimed that the defendants had conspired to deprive him of his due process rights and that KEA used its political influence to have him fired.

The superintendent and the board settled out-of-court just before trial, and the judge dismissed the claims against Covington. After a seven-day trial, the jury returned a verdict against KEA and Gist, awarding Eaton $50,000 in compensatory damages and $1 million in punitive damages.

To appeal, KEA and Gist were required by the court to post $2 million as security.

Finally, however, in a decision issued last September, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit reversed the judgment and vacated the damage award.

The court's ruling is a sweeping affirmation of the free speech rights of school employees and their Associations. The court accepted as true Eaton's statement that KEA and Gist actively campaigned to have him fired and publicly labeled him a racist because of his remarks.

The court also accepted Eaton's claim that, because of its political power, KEA had great influence over the school board. But "even if everything Eaton says is true," the court ruled, KEA and Gist had every right under the First Amendment to flex their political muscle.

"In short," the court said, "what Eaton attempts to characterize as a conspiracy is more accurately and commonly known as free expression and political organizing.

"KEA and Gist reacted in an understandable way to a racial epithet made in a professional context by an elementary school principal. [They] were merely exercising their First Amendment right to petition the proper governmental body for the removal of Eaton and their First Amendment right of free speech," the court concluded.

Ironically, in concluding that KEA and Gist could not be sued for trying to have Eaton fired, the court relied on an earlier Sixth Circuit decision in which an NEA member unsuccessfully sued a parent for lobbying the school board to have him dismissed.

In that case, *Stachura v. Truszkowski*, a conservative parent organized a successful campaign to have teacher Ed Stachura fired on the basis of rumors about the content of his Life Science class. The Sixth Circuit held that Stachura could sue his school board, but dismissed the case against the parent, holding that she had the right under the First Amendment to complain to the school board and seek to have the teacher removed.

The Eaton case may not be over. Eaton's lawyer has asked the Sixth Circuit to rehear the case, and that motion is still pending. The attorneys who handled the appeal for KEA and Gist, however, believe there is virtually no chance that the motion will succeed.

Like most court decisions, the Eaton case offers a couple of lessons. School employees and their state Associations have the right to protest against perceived racism in the schools and even to try to have administrators dismissed.

At the same time, parents, have the right to complain to school boards about teachers and to try to get them fired. In matters of great public concern, such as running the public schools, the courts generally have granted citizens—including school employees—great leeway in complaining to school officials. That is, after all, what the First Amendment is all about.

—Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

PENSION BUY-INS worth another LOOK

With five-year CDs earning barely half what they were earning just four years ago, many public school employees are re-examining buy-ins as an investment alternative.

Falling interest rates on investments have increased the appeal of pension plan buy-ins—the purchase of retirement system credits for out-of-state or related service.

"Buy-ins, or buy-backs—as they're also called—are definitely more attractive today, especially for the longer-term employee," says Certified Financial Planner (CFP) Malcolm Makin. NEA-Rhode Island retains Makin's firm, Professional Planning Group, to offer free advice and discounted planning services to Association members.

Says Makin, "Today, the cost of the buy-back is less, and you're less likely to miss out on a more lucrative investment. At the same time, the salaries on which the pension is figured are no less than before."

While not all state retirement plans have experienced a surge of activity, some state Associations do note greatly increased interest among their members.

"We've been absolutely swamped with questions about buying pension credits," says Jill Kirwen, associate director of Research and Economic Services for the New Jersey Education Association. Kirwen's office is currently warning members that New Jersey's Division of Pension is taking up to 10 months to respond to requests.

At present, 38 states allow school employees to purchase retirement credits for public school teaching outside the state. Some also sell credits for federal, state, and local government employment; military service; educational and maternity leave; college and university teaching; and private school experience. The number of years that can be purchased is often limited, however, and some states make you give up your old pension.

Buy-ins make sense in several situations. The most clear-cut involves an employee who's not yet vested, but must retire early for personal reasons.

Makin recently advised a client with out-of-state teaching experience who was undergoing a severe case of job burnout. Facing a variety of family problems, too, she was unable to concentrate on teaching. She didn't qualify for disability leave and was one year short of being vested.

"For this person, the dollar cost of buying that last year of service was almost irrelevant," says Makin.

This brings up the main problem with buy-ins; they can be expensive. In many states you must pay both the employee's and the employer's contributions, plus interest—and you must do it with one lump sum. A few states offer installment payment options.

Another hitch: most buy-in plans base costs on your present salary, not what you earned in the year you're buying back.

Still, for some people, a buy-in can be a wise financial move. The typical defined benefit pension plan multiplies final average salary times years of service, times a percentage factor. In some states, that factor is 2.5 percent or more.

For someone in one of those states currently earning $40,000 a year, buying an extra year of service translates into another $1,000 or more per year in retirement benefits. And that doesn't include any future cost-of-living increases and/or health insurance benefits the pension plan may offer.

"It can be a tremendous value," says New Jersey's Kirwen, whose state recently liberalized its rules governing pension credits.

Kirwen has seen NJEA members earn the equivalent of an 18 to 21 percent return on their money when health insurance benefits were added into the equation. Still, she warns, any purchase of pension credits is a personal matter involving many intangibles.

In most cases the returns aren't nearly so high as currently seen in New Jersey. Nevertheless, many people are attracted to the security of lifetime payments and COLAs.

A common problem for those wanting to buy-in: coming up with the lump-sum payment. You can't use money from an Individual Retirement Account or a Tax-Deferred Annuity without paying taxes on it—plus a 10 percent penalty if you're under age 59-1/2.

"You shouldn't exhaust your emergency funds," warns Makin. "People who borrow need to weigh the cost of the loan against future earnings. Buy-backs work best for someone with ample cash on hand."

In 1989 Rhode Island attempted to resolve this problem by passing the Compact for Pension Portability for Educators provision.

This provision invites other state pension plans to enter into an agreement allowing educators who move from one plan to another to bring their years of service with them without paying for differences in the actuarial costs of the two plans. The pension funds handle the cost differential among themselves.

So far, according to NEA-Rhode Island President Harvey Press, no other state has agreed to join the compact.

Making the calculations to weigh the wisdom of a pension buy-in is rarely a do-it-yourself job. A financial planner, tax adviser, or accountant—especially one with other state employees as clients—might be helpful.

A few state and local Associations have full-time staff available to counsel individuals or groups of members on their state's pension plan. Many more have a staff member who can answer specific questions about the system.

Fellow Association members are also a good resource. Keep in mind, however, that some states have two-tiered systems that treat old and new hires differently.

Finally, consult your local NEA-Retired chapter. Some chapters sponsor mentor programs, where retirees share their knowledge and experience.

For More Information

To learn about pension buy-ins in your state, contact your state retirement office. For information about pending state legislation concerning pension buy-ins, contact your state Association.

There are certain circumstances in which you can accrue retirement credits while technically not on the payroll.

For example, some pension systems allow credits for educational leave, medical leave, military service, maternity leave, parenting leave, out-of-state reciprocity, and Association leave. In some cases there is no charge, in others the employee pays only the employee share, and in others the employee must pay both shares.

Your NEA

ABOUT ELECTIONS

Delegates to the 1993 NEA Representative Assembly, to be held July 2-5 in San Francisco, will elect a president, vice-president, and two Executive Committee members. All four officers will serve three-year terms, beginning September 1, 1993.

Until this year the executive officers (president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer) have served two-year terms, and no officer has been eligible to serve more than three terms in the office to which elected. By amendment to the NEA Constitution, the 1991 Representative Assembly set the terms of the executive officers at three years rather than two and established a maximum of two terms. The number of years that an executive officer may serve in the office to which elected remains at six. The constitutional amendment becomes effective with the election of the president and vice-president by the 1993 Representative Assembly and with the election of the secretary-treasurer by the 1994 Representative Assembly.

Candidates for the executive officer and Executive Committee positions must have been NEA Active members for two years immediately preceding the election. Filing forms and election information, including the *Campaign Regulations for Candidates for NEA Office*, are available from the NEA Executive Office, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Submission of filing forms does not constitute nomination for office.

NEA will provide a number of services for candidates who have filed for office.

- Candidates may request tables and meeting rooms for campaign-related activities during meetings of the NEA Board of Directors, December 11-13, 1992, and February 12-13 and April 30–May 1, 1993. All three meetings will be held at NEA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. For further information, telephone 202/822-7196.
- Candidates who have filed for office by April 1 may submit a candidate statement (not to exceed 125 words) and photograph for publication in the May/June issue of *NEA Today*.

Other NEA services to candidates are spelled out in the *Campaign Regulations for Candidates for NEA Office*.

The Representative Assembly may also need to elect at-large NEA directors representing ethnic minorities, administrators, classroom teachers in higher education, and Active members employed in educational support positions pursuant to Article V, Section 1(c), (d), (e), and (f) of the Constitution. If such elections are necessary, the presidents and executive directors of state affiliates, the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, and the NEA Committee on Minority Affairs will be notified in June.

Article IV, Section 4, of the NEA Constitution, Affirmative Action Procedure, requires the Association to notify all Association members about that provision and the electoral process prior to every presidential election. The language of Article IV, Section 4, is as follows:

By December 1 of each membership year immediately preceding the next membership year in which a presidential election is to be held (i.e., approximately 18 months prior to the date of the election), appropriate information about the office of President and the electoral process, including all relevant timelines, shall be sent to each of the ethnic-minority special interest groups identified in Bylaw 12; and

During the membership year in which the aforesaid presidential election is to be held, a copy of this section of the Constitution, with an appropriate explanation as to its background and intent, shall be included in (a) an Association publication sent to all members by December 1 and (b) the material that is sent to the delegates to that year's Representative Assembly.

If after any period of eleven (11) consecutive membership years a member of an ethnic-minority group has not served as President, the Association shall take such steps as may be legally permissible to elect a member of an ethnic-minority group.

Article IV, Section 4, was adopted by the 1988 Representative Assembly to replace a predecessor provision that had been in effect since 1975. The current provision is consistent with all legal requirements.

The NEA Board of Directors has affirmed its commitment to "meaningful ethnic-minority participation at all levels of the Association" and has taken the position that—

- An ethnic-minority member periodically should serve as NEA President.
- Ethnic-minority members should serve in other elective and appointive positions in NEA and its affiliates.
- Ethnic-minority members should participate fully in all aspects of association operation at the national, state, and local levels.

SPECIAL PROJECT

Honoring Women

The NEA and the National Women's Hall of Fame (NWHF) have teamed up to help educators bring women's history into the classroom. Help the Hall of Fame grow and you can at the same time support NEA's own National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE).

The National Women's Hall of Fame, a national membership organization, celebrates the achievements of American women. Programs include the National Honors Ceremonies to induct women into the Hall, programs for students and adults, a quarterly newsletter, special publications, Museum Shop catalogues, and more.

The Hall is funded by members, corporations, and foundations.

Here's how it works: Join the NWHF for $15 for the first year (instead of the usual $25) and get, along with your NWHF membership, "Great Classroom Ideas for Teaching Women's History" (materials for K-12), and a color poster. The Hall will contribute half your membership fee—$7.50—in your name to NEA's NFIE. The money will support a wide range of projects to improve education—from dropout prevention to development of new school technology. And it's tax-deductible.

To take advantage of this special National Woman's Hall of Fame membership offer, Write the National Women's Hall of Fame, P.O. Box 335, 76 Fall St., Seneca Falls, NY 13148; FAX them at 315/568-2976; or call them at 315/568-8060 or 703/370-3334.

SPEAKING OUT ON THE ISSUES

NEA, Achievers Team in TIME

NEA is reminding some 600,000 influential Americans of the need to invest in public education—via a series of ads in *TIME* magazine's "top management" edition.

Each ad features a different "American achiever" who graduated from public schools. The distinguished Americans include former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, musician Wynton Marsalis, and journalist Nancy Woodhull (shown here).

Each two-page ad opens with a color photo of an "achiever" and an autobiographical essay about what public education did for that person. Focal point of the facing page is a photo of children in some activity related to the achiever's field, with a reminder from NEA that the next generation of American achievers is in today's public schools. The ad closes with "Children. Our Most Precious National Resource"—tag line of the 1992-93 NEA TV spot.

The "achiever" ads are appearing in one November issue, one December issue, and two February issues of *TIME*.

WORKING FOR YOU

Women as Leaders

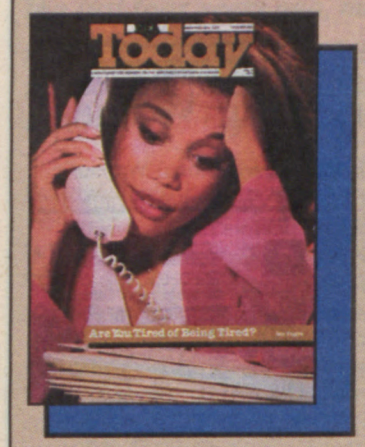
Women's leadership training at NEA is a national, state, and local effort. A key player is Gaye Barker (right), who coordinates the work of 54 trainers. In turn, these trainers disseminate leadership skills and knowledge to other trainers at the state level.

The Women's Leadership Training Program (WLTP) is monitored by NEA's Women's Concerns Committee, a 10-member standing committee that meets three times a year. WLTP offers the following training sessions.

- *Personal Assessment Leadership Skills*—teaches basic decision making.
- *Personal Leadership Skills*—offers more advanced decision-making skills and explains how to sort out personal values.
- *Group Process Skills*—covers diversity, multiculturalism, and gender.
- *Organizational Analysis Skills*—teaches NEA's structure, budget, and governance.
- *Campaigning To Win*—provides advanced study of campaigning techniques, such as fundraising.

For details, ask your state Association how to contact your women's leadership training coordinator.

Letters



'Assignment from Hell'

Boo, hiss to *NEA Today's* November debate. Both writers have some valid arguments, but each, along with *NEA Today*, did a disservice to millions of American students who wear the nebulous "at-risk" label.

Isn't it time to address the fact that the tough assignment is the one the teacher doesn't like, regardless of whether the instructor is a veteran or a new practitioner?

As a "regular classroom" professional who, by choice, has dealt exclusively with "at-risk" classes over the last several years, I fervently believe that attitude and teaching style have much more to do with any successful classroom than do years of experience.

Count me as one 12-year veteran who would view an "honors" class as an assignment from hell!

Nancy Flatt
Noblesville, Indiana

Both debaters missed a major point in answering the question: "Should Veteran Teachers Get the Toughest Assignments?" (Debate, November) by focusing on handling "problem" students.

Particularly in math, secondary students are grouped according to their success in the subject material. What happens when teaching assignments are made? Experienced, knowledgeable teachers get the "honors" and advanced course assignments. Inexperienced teachers and teachers "drafted" from other subject areas are assigned the remedial and reluctant students. What a formula for failure for the latter group!

Don't blame the administration. It's the senior teachers who jealously guard their "right" to choose which courses they will teach by insisting that talented students need the "best" teachers.

Come on, veteran teachers—take the challenge. Get out of your comfortable rut. Share your enthusiasm, knowledge, and expertise with the less successful students. Sure, it will be more work, but you will be amply rewarded every time you make a breakthrough with a previously unsuccessful student.

Jim Schulz
Bellevue, Washington

Tired of 'Grousing'

What started out as a high-interest article for me, "Tired of Being Tired" (Cover story, November), quickly soured when I reached teacher Cindy Guthro's quote in the second column: "Our contract used to state the end of the day as 2:30 p.m. Now, with the added duties of restructuring, we don't get away before 3:00 p.m. or 3:15."

When are the members of the teaching profession going to tune in for a reality check? What other white-collar professional earning between $30,000 and $50,000 a year whines about having to work until 3:15? It's this kind of grousing that demotes our status in the eyes of the general public.

What's even more disturbing than Ms. Guthro's complaint is the fact that *NEA Today* writers and editors deemed it a quote important enough to be included in the article.

There are many professions that demand long hours. Teaching happens to be one of them. Until our teacher unions resolve the dilemma of whether to promote professionalism or clock-punching in favor of the former, we have nowhere to go but up.

Priscilla Jackman
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

What Rights?

Freedom of the press belongs to those who own the press, and school papers properly belong to the taxpayers ("How Free Is the Student Press?" Legal Times, November).

Until and unless the taxpayers get together and vote that students can publish anything they please in the school paper, it's the job of school officials to control the content of the paper as they see fit.

Students' First Amendment rights are not denied simply because they may not be allowed to publish in a particular paper they don't own. They still have the right to try to have their material published elsewhere. Or, they can publish it themselves by hiring a printer to do the job or by simply photocopying their articles.

All of us have First Amendment rights, but that doesn't mean we can demand that any particular publication print our material. I'd love to get my stories and articles published in all manner of high-paying national newspapers and magazines. But I have no right to demand it any more than I have a right to have this letter printed in your publication.

Sylvia-Lee Arleigh
Old Town, Maine

Inclusion

When I read "School Nurses Defend Special Kids" (Local Look, October), I thought: "Oh, good! Someone finally defending students' right to be included instead of excluded." How disappointed I was when I finished the article.

I've worked for more than 10 years with students who experience profound and severe developmental delays. Yes, privacy for diaper changing is required. We have worked around that with partitions in self-contained special education elementary school classrooms for years. It's not an insurmountable reason for exclusion.

Were the nurses in San Antonio, Texas, truly concerned that the health needs of these "14 medically fragile" students were disregarded by the district? Or were they trying to keep the students in a "central special education facility"? Would the nurses have filed a grievance to win the training and facilities to enable the "medically fragile" children to be more included in their society if the district had not moved them first?

I agree nurses need to be part of the team when considering least restrictive placement for students with medical concerns. But I also believe that medical fragility on its own need not be the deciding factor of where a child goes to school.

D. Catherine Bissey
Eagle River, Alaska

Some Hero

You blew it when you classified Senator Tim Wirth as a hero (Heroes & Zeroes, October). The last thing we need is to lose a voice for education in Congress. Sen. Wirth should be given a zero for giving up the fight.

Let us hope that the rest of the education supporters stick with us in the battle for education at the federal level.

Alan Junck
Shenandoah, Iowa

Professionalism?

I recently was asked by *NEA Today* to take a position on gifted and talented programs (Debate, October). I did so happily, as I believe it is our professional responsibility to engage in the serious question of equity in education. I use the word *engage* purposefully, as collegial discussion and debate are critical for reflective practitioners.

I was therefore horrified when anonymous letters were sent to my school claiming my position was "baloney" and worse. How does this further the discussion of education reform?

I certainly welcome good debate or I would not have participated in the *NEA Today* debate. What really concerns me is the blatant disregard for professional courtesy and collegial respect these letters demonstrate.

Amy Mann
Newton, Massachusetts

Editor's note: All letters about NEA Today *stories should be signed and sent to the address listed at the bottom of this page.*

'Shame on You'

Theresa Mangano wrote: "It is unfortunate that our Association has no regard for parents' right to choose a better school for their children..." (Letters, October).

In response, I say shame on you, Theresa, for not supporting the public education system that is helping to support your family financially. One can only assume that you feel the job you do in the classroom is good enough for someone else's child but not for yours.

Perhaps part of the problem with public education is people like you who apparently have little faith in public schools and go to great lengths to let everyone know it.

Sherry Kaestner
Burlington, Iowa

I can't help but be touched by this country's need for quality education. I can't, however, be hornswoggled into believing that education quality or education reform can be instituted by "choice" or "voucher" systems, as Theresa Mangano asserts (Letters, October).

I think Ms. Mangano is missing the boat when she says she is grateful for the "choice " (her word) to send her boys to a private Christian school.

Doesn't she really mean she is grateful for the *money* to send these kids to Christian school? After all, no one has taken away her right at any time to send her boys to private school; that right is exercised when the family can afford it.

Furthermore, if values education is the impetus behind Mangano's choice to send her children to a private school, let's save the extra money needed to fund these institutions, enhance public education with this money, and all go to church to learn our morals. After all, going to church is free.

Jeff Parish
Delano, California

Ohman
The Oregonian, Portland

NEA members are cordially invited to use this page to exchange ideas with their colleagues around the nation. We reserve the right to edit letters for length. Address correspondence to "Letters," 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Debate

Is Vocational Education Tracking in Disguise?

YES

Larry Salzman

Kathryn Pearce has taught business education at Coon Rapids Senior High School in Coon Rapids, Minnesota for 13 years. She is a member of the Minnesota Education Association Board of Directors and serves as chief negotiator for the Anoka-Hennepin Education Association.

Under the current rigid educational structure, two tracks exist. A strong vocational background is available only to students who don't fall into the "college bound" category. And adequate preparation for college is available only to students who take no more than a very few vocational courses.

Overall, the use of these two tracks in the educational system restricts the options students have available to them in the future.

The experiences of my children in high school provide perfect examples of the problems involved with the current tracked educational system.

My son Richard, an honors student, took the traditional college prep path.

He filled his six-hour days with the courses recommended for college-bound students—math, English, social studies, science, foreign language, and electives such as speech and humanities.

The college prep credits he needed during the six-hour school day limited considerably his opportunity to pursue vocational education choices.

This limitation eventually presented Richard with a problem. He had no room in his overstuffed schedule for anything more than an introductory course in accounting.

Because he had so little "real world" experience, he got to the University of Minnesota and found himself lacking vocational focus. As a result, he ended up pursuing three different majors.

Although Richard's college tracking prepared him for higher education, his lack of vocational experience made it difficult for him to target career goals.

On the other hand, my daughter Tracy (also an honors student) followed a vocational path. She enrolled in several business courses and in her senior year completed a business internship at the Coon Rapids City Hall.

Due to her successful internship working in public service, Tracy was considerably more focused than most college students about what she wanted to major in and what line of work she intended to pursue after college.

But when Tracy arrived at nearby St. Cloud College, she had to complete several courses, especially in math, that were not college level.

Although her high school vocational courses prepared her for the college financial management major, she was not considered "academically prepared" for college.

The restrictions placed on my children by the current educational structure did not adequately address the needs of either of them.

Some schools are attempting to address this problem by providing more opportunities for all students. Options frequently discussed include having more periods in the day, incorporating vocational education into the academic program, and adding more academics to vocational education.

I believe the most successful option might be to combine the last two approaches: integrate vocational education into the academic courses and add greater academic challenges to the vocational curriculum.

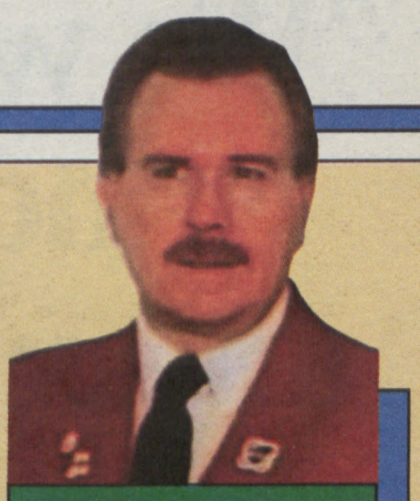
Coon Rapids Senior High uses this method with some 80 of its at-risk students. The school-within-a-school developed for these students strives to integrate vocational and academic education.

This concept could and, I believe, should be expanded to provide the students with additional options. These options need to include:

- in-depth study in all subject areas
- connection of subjects to each other and to real problems,
- enough rigor in all subjects to allow students to successfully pursue either a vocation or a college education after high school.

The current tracked structure is not serving students well. I've seen its legacy in the lives of my children and other students who complain they're being restricted by the system.

Schools must move from the rigid, six-hour-a-day, tracked structure to a more integrated system if they want to provide a truly comprehensive education for all students.



NO

John Paul Jones coordinates trade and industrial education programs at Williamson High School in Mobile, Alabama. Past president of the Mobile County Education Association, Jones has served on MCEA's board since 1979 and has also been active in the Alabama Education Association.

First off, let's get some definitions straight. To me, tracking is a way of sequencing learning experiences so that students can achieve a goal by mastering the steps along the way. For example, students learn to add and subtract before tackling algebraic expressions and quantitative analysis.

To me, vocational education—like all education—helps prepare students to take their place in society as productive and informed citizens.

Add these two definitions together, and you'll see I don't find tracking or vocational education limiting. Instead, I see by these definitions we are helping students with different abilities and learning styles reach the many different goals they set for themselves.

I'm not just talking abstractly here. Vocational education courses helped me to better understand some tough concepts by providing concrete instruction—and, at the same time, helped me find a career I love.

In high school, during the early 1960s, I elected to take a college-scientific course of study. When I had difficulty with the abstract concepts of my math courses, I had to repeat them and thereby miss taking my advanced science courses. To fill the void in my schedule, I chose two years of mechanical drawing, speech, and drama.

Years later, I earned a B.S. in industrial psychology while working full-time and became a drafting instructor. After completing teacher certification, I earned an M. Ed. in guidance and counseling and became a trade and industrial education coordinator.

After coming to terms with my learning style, I discovered why students are encouraged to take vocational education when they have difficulty in academic education, and why these same students are successful in their later training and work experience.

Since then, I've seen time and again a student's inability to grasp abstract concepts give way to mastery once that student sees practical applications in vocational education courses.

As traditionally defined, vocational education is that branch of education responsible for preparing students for work. It's the basis of the country's employment-related education and training programs.

It provides a variety of programs in related basic education, career development, general or vocational knowledge, improved living skills, and occupation-specific preparation.

Vocational education students come from all segments of society. Generally, they are evenly divided between male and female students, although some specific areas have more students of one sex than the other. Minorities are represented more heavily—by about 4 percent—in vocational education classes than in the general population.

The vocational curriculum is more complex than others because it combines classroom instruction, laboratory work, participation in student organizations, and on-the-job training. It must be updated more often and more extensively than curriculum in other areas of education.

We have seen in the media that countries like Japan track their students through a series of tests, thereby prompting fierce competition and after school tutoring. Is this what we want?

If tracking is defined in this limiting fashion, then I can't categorize vocational education in the U.S. as tracking. Too many switches to other tracks are available, and most tracks generally lead in the same direction anyway.

I personally resist any effort to limit my students, who are all minorities in an inner-city school. I use my program to teach about the world of work and to help them understand themselves.

Students in my program have included valedictorians and special education students mainstreamed in the classroom and on the job.

I take pride in those who exceed what's expected of them, who become supervisors, own their businesses—and even provide job training and experience for my current group of kids.

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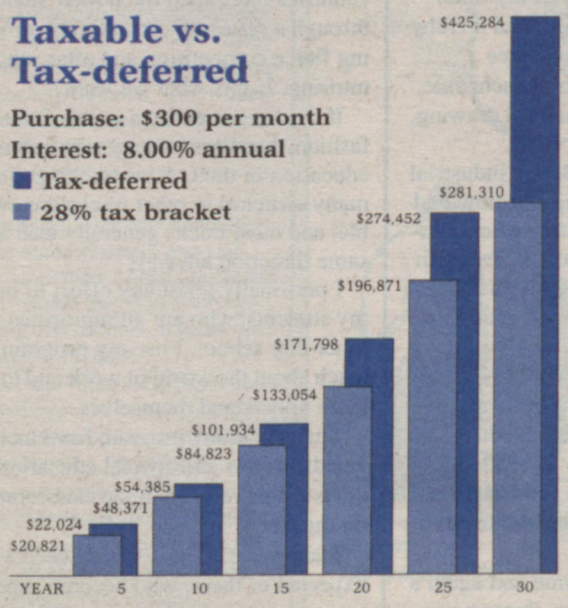

Note: This is hypothetical and is not intended to indicate the actual past or future performance of the Valuebuilder Annuity. Of course, income taxes are payable upon withdrawal.

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